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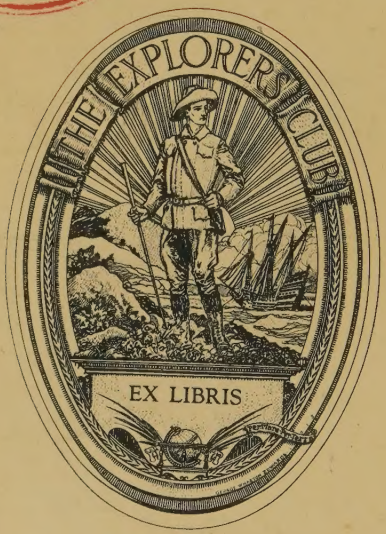

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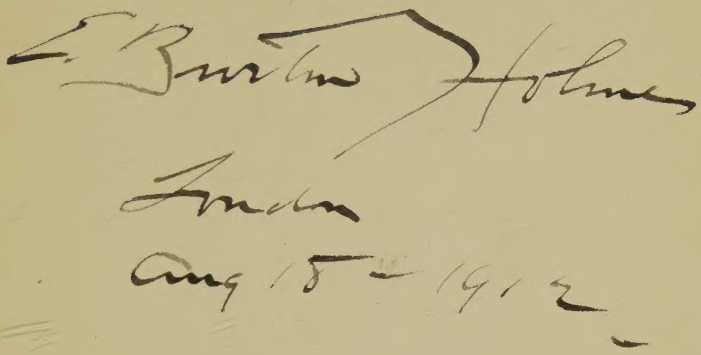

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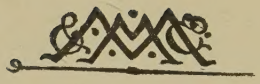

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PEOPLE AT SCHOOL

BY

H. FIELDING HALL

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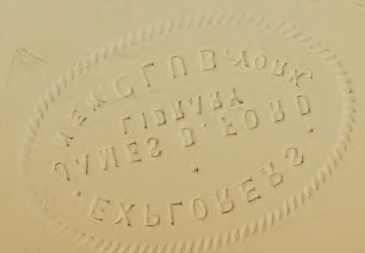

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PREFACE

SOME years ago I wrote *The Soul of a People.* It was an attempt to understand the Burmese, to see them as they do themselves, to describe their religion and its effect on them.

This book is also concerned with the Burmese. But it is from another point of view. That was of feelings and emotions and ideals, of the inner life as they understand it. It was individual, of man and woman. This is of the outer life, of success and failure, of progress and retrogression judged as nations judge each other. It is of the Burmese as a race, or nation. Both are, I think, true points of view. And although in this book it may seem that there is much that is not in accord with the former one, that is not I think really so. For life is complex. It has many sides, it must have many ideals. And though one ideal be opposed to another, they may yet both be good and both be true. We can never get far enough away, get high enough up to see life whole. If we could do so, all these lesser truths, all these lesser ideals would blend into the great Truth. Meanwhile

we but see what we can. I hope, therefore, that this book may be found no less true than the other, that it may be accepted as in a way its complement and companion. It may read, I fear, somewhat disconnectedly, without due rhythm and sequence. But if that is so, I can only urge in apology that it was written bit by bit. A chapter was begun one day, and finished may be two months later. For a busy life leaves but short times of leisure with long spaces in between.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE TRUE BURMA

THE people of whom this book is written are the Burmese people, and their land is that which formed the kingdom of the last kings, and which was annexed in 1885.

It is true that British Burma, or, as it is now called, Lower Burma, was annexed in 1825 and 1852, but these districts are not really Burma at all.

The home of the Burman is in the dry zone that lies about the old capitals of Pagan, Sagaing, Shwebo, Ava, Amarapura, and Mandalay. It was the people of these districts who founded the various kingdoms of Burma, and who alone are rightly called Burmese. The people of the delta and Tenasserim districts were Karens, and Peguans or Talaings. They are races very closely allied to the Burmese, but they are distinct. They differ in their dialect, in their appearance, and in their capacity. When the Burmese kings extended their empire to the sea and overran Lower Burma they did not recognise the people they found as of their own race or their equals. They conquered

them, and ruled them, and despised them, and at the same time some emigration occurred from the congested districts above to the lower country. When we invaded the delta in 1825 the natives arose in revolt against their Burmese conquerors and assisted us.

After 1825, when we returned these provinces to the King of Burma, the immigration of Burmese from Burma proper to the delta increased. The dry districts of Upper Burma were practically full, and the surplus population drifted down to Lower Burma to the vast swamps which their energy made into rice fields. The administration also became Burmanised, so that when war again broke out in 1852 we found Lower Burma more Burmese than before. The local institutions had been broken up by the Burmese Government, and the villages invaded by immigrants from the Upper province. But nothing stable had been established, and the Lower Burma we annexed in 1852 was really a chaos. It was in a state of transition. It bore to Upper Burma much the same relation as the western States of America did to the eastern States fifty years ago.

After our annexation of the delta the tide again turned ; the Burmese cultivators, who, following their armies, had come to Lower Burma to settle, returned. They did not like our rule, and they went back to Upper Burma in large numbers. Many parts of the delta were left without population, and the want was very thinly supplied by an increase in the immigration from India, which had been going on for centuries.

This state of affairs, however, did not last very long. The Upper kingdom was not fertile enough to support all its people, and the immigrants returned. But the process was slow, and it was not till after 1885 that it became fast. Since then the movement has been very large, and Lower Burma is now become entirely Burmese. The Talaing has disappeared, absorbed in the stronger race. Even the Karens in the west are now calling themselves Burmese. The Indian immigration is mostly of coolies to the mills and is but temporary, and in any case trifling compared to that of the Burmese. Every day new Lower Burma becomes more of a unit with Upper Burma. There is a strong tendency to cohesion and assimilation. But although in wealth and population the Lower districts now surpass the old kingdom, the essential differences remain. Lower Burma when annexed was simply a large tract of country thinly populated with differing races, with no central authority, no recognised customs, no cohesion. But Upper Burma was a nation with the traditions, the customs, and authority of many centuries. In annexing Upper Burma we took over a nation which, though primitive perhaps, was nevertheless a complete organism with an old-established system of government, both local and central, and an organised religious church.

Upper Burma was a nation in a way that neither Lower Burma nor any part of India was. It contained a compact nationality differing from its neighbours all round, with an individuality, a universal religion, an

identity, and a history which had lasted already for many centuries. It had never been seriously invaded, never conquered, never received any large number of aliens. The kings may have often changed, the governments been at times weak and evanescent, but with all this the nation always remained as a nation. You can write a history of Burma for eight hundred years, and by Burma you will mean always Upper Burma. In Lower Burma there was never any unity, never any solidarity. Little local kingdoms formed, and broke, and reformed again in different shape. The great bulk of the country was waste land occupied thinly by many differing races, and for a hundred years it had been held by the Burmese kings as a conquered country.

If these facts are borne in mind, they will furnish the clue to the following pages. It is because they are usually either unknown or ignored by writers on the subject that so many fallacies are current on the subject of Burma and the Burmese.

Burma in this book means Upper Burma, the kingdom we annexed in 1885.

The Burmese people mean the people who inhabit that area.

And therefore when I speak of Burmese customs, Burmese beliefs, Burmese traditions, I mean the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the people of Upper Burma.

In Lower Burma the immigrants, like all immigrants, as they came down, to a considerable extent forgot these traditions. Mixed up with other races, far from

their home influences, they became freer, both in a good and bad sense. The village communities have less coherence, the religion less influence, the restraints of tradition and customs less authority than in the old country. Before the annexation the Burman in Lower Burma, even if settled there for two or three generations, always considered the Mandalay king to be his king, the Mandalay archmonk to be the head of his religion. He took his fashions and his customs from above.

In Upper Burma you can study the Burman as an individual and as part of an old and organised community, which in ways still exists in full strength and vigour. In Lower Burma the community is yet to make, and the individual still somewhat *dépaysé*. But of course Lower Burma cannot be passed over: the existence of such a large area of rich land near to the home of the Burmese has inevitably greatly influenced even those who have not emigrated. It attracted them in the past. It attracts their surplus people in the present. In the future, by its wealth and its greater susceptibility to outside influence, it will probably become in some ways the more important of the two.

But whatever happens, Burma proper can only be Upper Burma, and the real Burman people can only be the inhabitants of that country.

America may or may not be a greater country than England, and an American may or may not be superior to an Englishman. But however this be, America is not England, nor is a New Englander or Californian

an Englishman, though he be of English descent. And although you may study Englishmen and the descendants of Englishmen in America and Australia, you cannot study the English people anywhere out of England.

I do not know if this will seem a self-evident proposition unnecessary to have explained. It seems perhaps of the very essence of the self-evident. But if so, it is evidence that is quite commonly disregarded out here. Because when the provinces of Pegu and Tenasserim were annexed they were officially called Burma, and because the people now all call themselves Burmese, everything else is assumed. The Burman of the delta is supposed to be the natural Burman, and the circumstances under which he lives now, to be his natural and traditional environment.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the most astonishing theories are currently received as true.

I hope that this book may dissipate some of them.

I have divided the book into two parts. In the first part I have tried to show what Burma was like before the war, what was the nature of its people and institutions, and the course the war took. I think it is necessary to the understanding of the second part to know by what methods the Burmese people were conquered and the country pacified. It explains much, both of them and their temperament and of us and our ways, that would be otherwise difficult to convey.

In the second part I have tried to indicate what

our rule is, how it affects them, and the changes that have come upon them in consequence.

There is nothing that England is prouder of than her empire, her ability to rule eastern nations, and she is glad to think that they benefit by that rule. She knows the Pax Britannica that she has made and the trade she has created. These are things that leap to the eye. But, after all, in themselves they mean but little. Peace may be good but only as a means to greater ends. The dry rot of peace may be worse than the friction of war. A peace that is only a diminution of vitality, a submission to a weight above, is no desirable thing. We have made a peace, what are the forces that are at work in this peace? If we have banished war, that is often the cleanser and corrector of peoples, what have we put to take its place?

Trade is good, wealth is good if it be not too concentrated, if all share in it, if it be not accompanied by evils greater than the benefits. Is this true here?

And of all the things besides, what of them? There is so much that goes to the making of a man or a people besides just peace and plenty. There is happiness, there is character, there is honesty, there is justice, there is courage, there is religion. What of all these things? What do we teach in our school, and how far are the lessons learnt?

Never before have we taken over a complete people like we did in Upper Burma, never before have we had

to subdue a country as we had it. What has it meant to the Burmese?

Nations and governments and men exist and are strong so long only as they carry out the tasks that Providence has set them. But Providence has her own ways, she acts but never tells you what she intends. She launches men and nations forth, and then she waits and watches. If you do well, then is it well with you. If you do ill, then is it ill. Her rewards and punishments are great. But she is dumb. She never preaches nor prophesies. She acts. While you are useful to her, she uses you. And when your task is finished, then she will let you go.

We know that we are strong, and we are sure, therefore, that in some way we are of use. If Providence has put us here to rule Burma, it is because she wants us to do some of her work.

What is that work?

She never tells us.

What are we doing?

That, perhaps, we can see. And if we can know that, we may be able to guess, though ever so dimly, what our mission is. For that we are fulfilling our mission we may be sure, or all would not be well with us as it is.

CHAPTER II

TWENTY YEARS AGO

To the traveller going to Upper Burma the road now is easy. In eighteen hours you may go by rail from Rangoon to Mandalay. In another day you may go, still by rail, to the uttermost frontiers on the north or east. You can take a steamer and go up the Chindwin.

And the journey, whatever it may contain of beauty or novelty of scenery, will be without incident. Nothing will happen to you. The country through which you pass is as quiet and dull as any other part of our well-administered empire. You need never carry a revolver or even a stick, and you will find the Union Jack waving metaphorically on every telegraph post, on every steamer, on every tree and rock. The country is swathed in it, and the substratum never peeps through. You will go the length and breadth of the land and know as little of the Burmans when you return as when you started. The atmosphere of British rule and British trade surrounds you like a guard-rail. You never get beyond it. The Burman world exists for you only as a panorama outside your carriage windows. But twenty years ago it was different.

It was late afternoon when my companion and I crossed the frontier. Behind us lay the long straight road along which we had come. It reached from us back to a garrison town. Behind the town there was the railway, beyond the railway was the sea. This road was as the last tentacle of a great organism whose heart lay five thousand miles away. It was the finger-tip of England and civilisation and the West.

Beside us as we stopped was a white pillar. There the road ended. Beyond us was the forest. And as we came to this frontier post we stopped and looked. The rain came down unceasingly. The road was a sea of mud through which our ponies had splashed with difficulty. It was straight and ugly and forlorn. But we could see far along it. It was purposeful and direct, evidently knowing its own object. We knew whence we had come. Whither we were about to go we could not tell. This was the end of civilised rule and government—so we were told. Beyond us lay the wastes and woods of a retarded barbarism. We sat upon our ponies in the wet and waited. Our bullock carts were struggling yet across the mud. We wanted them to close up ere we crossed the frontier. We wanted all to be together.

When they came up we went on.

The woods in front were dense. The broad, cut road had ended. But there continued from its end some narrow tracks that passed into the forest. Our guide chose one of these, and we went on.

Directly the pillar passed, our Burmese with us

laughed; a cart-man shouted; a man on foot leaped into the air and sang; another clapped himself upon the chest and breathed full breaths.

They looked at us and laughed again.

'They say,' explained our guide, 'that now they come into a free country. They are glad.'

We rode forward.

The cart-track wound in and out among the trees. Where an obstruction rose the road went round. If a tree fell, it lay, no one removed it, the track made a detour. If a mud hole formed, the track sought higher ground. There were a maze of tracks sometimes that crossed and re-crossed. They were the tracks of last year, of the year before, of hundreds of years ago. Sometimes the rub of wheels had, in a narrow place, worn the rock into ruts so deep at last that the cart body stranded in the ridge between. There was never fifty yards straight. Yet was the going pleasanter than on the broad road that we had left. The mud was less deep, there was more variety and interest.

A mile of this wandering brought us to the frontier station.

That was a small hamlet of grass-thatched huts surrounded by a high thorn fence. The gateway lay in a pool of mud and filth. The houses were poor and mean, built on piles, the floors five feet above the ground. Our guide halted before a hut in the centre of the village, and we stopped. He called out something. Presently into a little verandah came out a stout old man. He was dressed simply in a blue

cotton *longyi* and a soiled white jacket, and he smiled upon us amiably.

'Who are you?' he asked.

Our guide explained.

'Where are you going?'

'To Ningyan.'

'Are you armed?'

We opened our coats and showed a revolver in the belt of each.

The old man nodded.

'He says,' explained our guide, 'that there have been robberies recently, and it is as well to go about armed.'

Then our guide took twenty rupees from us which he paid to a ragged-looking follower who held a flint-lock gun and smoked under the shelter of the eaves. The old man beamed upon us from aloft. He was the commander of the post and the customs agent He did not take his duties very seriously. I met him again later, in somewhat more unfortunate circumstances for him. He was running then, but was still good-tempered.

Then, getting a light from the sentry, we went on.

We had crossed the frontier and were now in Independent Burma, where King Thibaw ruled. Beyond the village the road got worse. The woods had ended, and we came on huge flats covered with rank grasses, where rice is planted later in the year. The water stood upon the fields, and the wheels sank sometimes up to their axles. The little ponies tripped and slipped

and waded courageously. But our progress was slow and the night came fast.

Presently it was quite dark. The rain fell more persistently than ever. It seemed to block us in within walls of wet. We could not see. Sometimes a cart got stuck and a halt had to be made to extricate it. Sometimes a pony fell and the rider slipped into the mud. The tall wet grasses brushed against us, and sometimes we stumbled against a tree-stem or a mound.

Still we went on.

Some three hours after dark we found the earth beneath us growing firmer. A light appeared at a distance. Then another. We had come at length to our camping-place.

It was outside the village. There were two buildings without walls, a roof, a floor of teak some twenty feet square, the usual resting-places built for travellers. We took one of them, and our men the other.

Out of the village we borrowed a few mats to wall one side. Our boys lit a fire upon some earth in a corner and made us some cocoa, which with biscuits and cold tinned meat formed our dinner. Then we changed into dry clothes.

Luckily, the night was hot.

So I passed my first night in Upper Burma twenty years ago. The rain poured all night long in torrents, and I lay awake wondering whether the robbers would think it worth while to come out in such wet, wondering if this was a fair sample of what life here was to

be, wondering that men find pleasure in leaving the trodden ways of civilisation, wondering how soon I could get back. That was twenty years ago, and I am here still.

Next morning we woke to undiminished gloom. The rain clouds lay upon the fields. They drifted past in sad procession as of mourners to a grave. Their dripping skirts trailed over all our world. The water in the fields had deepened. The mud was more persistent, the grasses taller. Still there was no road. The cart-tracks wandered to and fro across the plain. We could not see. But the Burmans have the instinct of direction. They might be walking compasses. They always reckon by the compass. They do not say 'turn to the right,' but 'turn to the west.' They do not speak of the 'table near the window,' but 'the table in the east of the room.' They speak of the north and south side of a street, not the shady or sunny side. Of two tumblers on a table one will be the east tumbler, the other the west. Thus, even in this rain and mist, they knew at once. 'That is north,' they said, 'and that is east. Our way lies about north-east.' Then they drove on.

The distance was seven miles. We had some bullion in the carts and dared not leave them and ride on. So we plodded along in front of them. As on the previous evening, we sometimes fell, and the carts very often stuck.

At last the weather lightened. A little breeze came sweeping down the fields breaking the clouds.

The dense wall parted, and now and then we caught long vistas of the distance. Sometimes we saw a clump of palms, a distant hill, a long reach of plain. Then the clouds would shut again and re-open. At last we saw some spires. The mist closed upon them quickly, but when it cleared again we saw we were approaching a town. A high stockade of great teak logs fenced it about, and above it rose the roofs of houses, the spires of monasteries, and groves of palms. A little watery sunshine flickered over like a smile. The clouds drew up, and we found ourselves in a broad swampy plain. The town was a mile away, and beyond it lay the hills.

The road became better, the tracks united, and we were evidently on a highway once again. Another sign showed us that we had come upon a frequented way. It was two crosses, and on the crosses were two bodies. Vultures sat by them, and crows pecked at them. Our guide told us they were two of four robbers recently arrested and executed. They were hung there to be a warning. So we did in England a hundred years ago.

Then we went on and gained the town. That was at the end of May, in 1885, and here I lived till the war broke out in November.

It was a strange life.

There were eight of us there, and we lived in houses near the centre of the town. The manager had a house to himself, we seven chummed in a large building near. Our houses were all within a fence, and we

had gates which were closed at night. I remember the watchmen were natives of India.

Our business was that of the firm which held the monopoly of the great teak forests of Upper Burma. We lived mostly out in camp, supervising the ringing of the living trees ; the felling of the timber three years later, when it was seasoned ; its draught to the water-courses, where it lay till the freshets swept it down to the main river.

There it was caught and rafted for Rangoon.

We travelled about a great deal up and down these streams and in the forests. Sometimes we rode on ponies, sometimes on elephants. We put up in rest-houses like that I have already described, or in native houses. We lived principally on tins. At headquarters we got bread and soda-water sent up from Toungu, and we could usually buy fowls. But in camp there was nothing but rice and vegetables to be had. Cattle might not be killed, and the villagers would seldom sell us fowls. Milk could never be obtained ; although the country was full of fat cattle the cows were never milked. The Burmese hate milk. They regard it with disgust. And so amid a bounty of beef and of milk we almost starved for animal food. We ate tinned meat till our souls abhorred it.

Our only amusement was lawn-tennis at head-quarters. Once one of us went to shoot snipe in a marsh, but the soldiers turned out, fearing it was an invasion, and we received a serious warning not to do so again. When we were on tour we travelled

generally every day; when we were at Ningyan we rarely went outside our fence. The town was, like any other Burmese town except Mandalay, built anyhow. The streets were narrow, dirty, never mended, never cleaned, scavenged by pigs and dogs. In the rains there were numerous mud-holes and pools, with sometimes a sidewalk of planks for pedestrians built by private effort as a work of merit. European villages were little different two hundred years ago. There was nowhere to walk, nowhere to ride. The dogs barked and snapped behind you, and the people jostled you. If you met an official, you had to kneel down or get out of the way.

As to this last, I do not complain. I do not think foreigners have a right to claim to be exempt from the usual respect due to the government of the country they live in. And as regards the former, matters are not much changed now. No European can walk through an ordinary village now with any comfort.

But though there was a feeling of restriction, of confinement, there was, at first, no sense of danger. We travelled about quite freely and met with hospitality everywhere. There was never any difficulty in finding a roof of sorts and the country food. There was very rarely any discourtesy or insult. The people were always glad to see us. As to robbers, the only ones I saw or heard of, were those on the crosses beyond the town. We learned to laugh at the exaggerated stories current in English Burma about the insecurity of life and property in Upper Burma, and about the

discontent of the people. The people were content as far as we saw. They governed themselves in little village communities, and the central government, whether good or bad, affected them very little. They lived happy, careless, open lives, never wanting the necessities of life; pleased to be alive, pleased with themselves and all about them. They seemed gay children of a younger world not yet come out to the troubles of school life.

Their amusements were many, their laughter was free and cheery, they had no ambitions, save the highest of all, to take the hour as it came and make the best of it. They were in their daily life honest and truthful. They troubled the courts but little, and settled their disputes at home.

We were friendly with them all. The officials often came to see us. The governor would come and dine with our manager, furtively drawing his feet up to the seat of the chair, for he preferred to sit cross-legged.

The revenue official came, the forest official, the captain of the Shan regiment.

They asked us to get them guns from England. They drank our whisky, and they sold us ponies. They were cheerful and friendly, and we liked them. I fear we had little opinion of their ability. They seemed to be playing at government.

What has become of all of them save the head revenue official, I do not know. He was killed after long fighting against us, years later. He was, I

remember, a pleasant little fellow. They say he was a brave and energetic leader.

We never went to see them, but I do not remember why. We did our business in the courts through Burmese agents. As for myself, the only thing I remember doing was engineering a canal away out in the district through which to float logs from one stream to another. The canal was, I am afraid, a failure. It never floated any logs. But it drained the people's fields of the water necessary for their rice crops, and they sued the company. My canal of which I was so proud was then closed up.

It was a dull and weary life. There was no interest, no pleasure, no excitement. It was for those on tour lonely to a terrible degree. But the European in the East must get accustomed to loneliness; and it gave an opportunity of observing the people that could hardly have come any other way. We saw them more clearly then, more fully than is quite possible to us as officials now. I could be sure, for instance, that their hospitality and friendliness was not due to desire to curry favour, but was natural and spontaneous in them to all strangers; and I could tell that where they disliked our ways, it was a genuine dislike *ad hoc*, and not mixed up with any political motive.

CHAPTER III

IN THE NURSERY

LET me try and give a clearer idea of what these people were like then under their own kings. Coming over from India, there were many striking differences to be noted between the Burmese and the peoples who live in the great peninsula. In India, I think the most pervading impression that one receives is of its immense sadness. The people seem always to be fighting against starvation, which is very near. The thin cattle, the starved dogs, the skinny fowls, the whole hard landscape is imbued with the same tragedy of life. A fierce sun rules it, blights and burns it, and the misery of existence is seared into all life. There is an oppression, a weight, as if life were a weariness and a disillusion terribly spent in trying to hold at arm's length disease and want and death, never escaping from them, often failing to hold them at bay. Everything is full of seriousness, of unhappy purpose, of resignation, sometimes even of despair.

It is of course true that this impression is a false and exaggerated one. Neither the country nor the people are so poor as they appear. Neither are the

lives so unhappy as they seem. They have their quiet pleasures; they are humorous if not gay. If they take life soberly, it may not mean sombrely. But still there is something. The people are old, tired, and worn out, sated with life.

In Burma all is different.

The people all seem young. They are never old. Life comes to them always as a pleasant thing. It is worth living. It contains many things worth having. It is to be passed through with a laugh and jest, not to be taken too seriously. The people seem all happy, all well to do, as if the wants of life were easily fulfilled. They have leisure too, they play, they make themselves merry. Their cattle are all fat, and they wear the same jaunty cheerful air as do their masters.

In India money rules. If you have money, you can buy almost anything, or any one. You have but to offer enough and you will have most that life can give. Money is the god. Money is he who averts death and starvation, therefore to be grasped by any effort that may be, and to be held with secrecy and determination. It is so hard to win.

In Burma it was not so. Its power was limited. Money was good to get, but so were many things. So was leisure, so were festivals, so was independence. Money was not a master but a slave. Man was worth more than silver. And so you found often that the power of money failed. If a man liked his pony, he would not sell it, not for any profit. If he did not want to go, he would not go, for no payment. It

seemed as if the necessities of life were come by so easily that their importance lessened. A man was free, less hampered by necessity, less subject to fear, therefore we thought he was idle and careless. I know now that this appearance too is partly false. Life everywhere in Burma is not easy. In the greater part of Upper Burma it is as hard as anywhere in the world. Throughout great areas the gross return per acre of cultivated land is not worth fifteen shillings. To live is difficult. It requires work as keen, as hard, as enduring as in India. Poverty is often terrible. But yet, withal, the Burman puts a good face on it. He laughs as well with his stomach empty as full. And he will work with double energy to-day that later he may take his holiday and be gay for a space. He is not an idler, but he likes his pleasure too. Life is a broader, greater thing than any money can cover. To many of us, earnest, narrow, taking our pleasures sadly, this attitude of theirs to life is hateful. We see the Burman at his festival and say, 'The lazy brute! Why is he not working?' We offer a man double pay to do this or that, and he refuses because his soul abhors it. Then we condemn him; we prophesy for him dire prophecies; we rail at him because he will be independent yet for all our money, because he will not turn himself into a machine, because he will retain his liberty. But for one who cares to look beyond the surface it is different. Then when you see the Burmese at their festivals, speeding the hours with song and dance and merriment, when you see the pleasure they

take in bright clothes, in gaiety of demeanour, in the pleasanter things of life, you will laugh too.

For beneath all this you know the toil, you know the labour with which they have wrung out their living from the earth. You will remember the start before sunrise, the return, very weary but full of song, late after dark. If the Burmans do not feel life so hardly as other people, if they can pay far more in taxes, if they keep their cattle fat and their faces happy, it is not because of any peculiar bounty of the soil. It is not because they do less, but more. It is in themselves, in their temperament.

> A merry heart goes all the way,
> A sad tires in a mile-a.

Another noticeable circumstance was the position of women. In India we see little of women. Those whom we see are labourers. The better classes are all shut up. Directly a man acquires a little money, he gives his wife rest from labour and retirement from view. As far as one can see in India, women enter very little into the worlds of business or of politics. They are apart. They have great influence, but it is hidden.

In Burma the women have equal rights with the men. They are as free, they have the same rights to property, they have equal opportunities for work. They do all the petty trading, and in those days did nearly all the weaving, while the men did all the heavy work. They were co-partners with their husbands in all

enterprises. Usually they kept the money-box, because they stayed at home. You met them everywhere. The streets were full of them. You could not do any business at all without them. They were an inseparable part of the community, just as much in evidence and apparently just as influential as the men.

Burma was at that time practically ruled by a queen, and in many households it seemed as if the same applied. You always had to consider a man's wife as well as himself in any contract. And in many deeds of conveyance of land, partnership, etc., the wife's name appeared with the husband's. They were the main supporters of the Buddhist monkhood, and had succeeded in imposing on the people generally many ideas which elsewhere are confined to the women alone.

For instance, the Buddhist edict against taking life of any sort.

The Burman man is naturally much like other men. His instincts make him like hunting, lead him to kill noxious beasts and reptiles, and rejoice in manly games.

But these instincts have to be kept under. Buddhism says it is wicked to take life, and in every home the mother and wife enforced this precept. Of course, in forest places deer had to be killed to protect the crops, panthers were killed to protect the cattle. Malefactors had occasionally to be executed. These were considered as unfortunate necessities, and were condoned. But that hunting was a grand and brave sport, that war

was a pleasure and a glory, were ideas that never occurred to them. They had no manly games, and, generally speaking, the tone of the community was feminine.

Yet with all this the men were not effeminate. They did not give one the idea of weakness, or cowardice. Rather they seemed like boys still in the nursery. They were under women's governance. Their mothers made their right and wrong, and the world was not yet open to them. They lived too sheltered lives to have awakened to the harder, stronger, truer things of life.

That the command of the Buddhist faith over the Burmese people is due to the ascendency of the women and women's ideas is very clear. And the ascendency of women was due to the secluded life the nation lived.

These people, as I have described them, lived in small village communities scattered over the great valley of the Irrawaddy from Mogaung to our frontier. Every village was almost self-contained. Its connection with the supreme government was very slight. The English papers in India and Lower Burma talked of the misrule of the Burman kings and how the people groaned under the tyranny.

Well, the last Burmese rule may have been weak or worse, individuals here and there, especially at Mandalay, may have suffered, but tyranny over the people there was none. There could be none.

Each village was self-contained and self-governed. It had its own headman, usually the descendant of a

long line of such, it assessed its own taxes, it settled all its minor affairs. A big crime, a land dispute with a neighbouring village, or a question of reserved timber might bring them into contact with the higher authorities, but speaking generally the village managed its own affairs, and the cental government mattered to it hardly at all.

Taxation could not be overdone, as if a village were over-assessed it had ample means of evading payment. There was no forced labour except occasionally for a big pagoda near Mandalay or a fort on the river. Wars were local and small, and did not affect the main country. The troops were raised by a system of service lands which was light and simple, and confined to certain tracts in the centre.

There was no aristocracy of any sort, no ruling class, no endowed church. The Burman villager was as free a man as it is possible to conceive. The restraints over him were those of his family and his village community, not of government. The local officials were taken from the mass, and returned to it. The restraints, both good and bad, which are the result of an organised government, a gradation of class and caste, and a disciplined church or sacred caste such as the Brahmans, did not exist. The monks were peasants also, and were dependent for daily bread on the village around them. Their Buddhism could never assume a position of command.

The Burman was a free man, subject only to the natural very limited restraints of a semi-civilised

community and the strong feminine influence. That made itself noticeable in his manner. The subservience of the ordinary Oriental is absent. He had the frankness and fearlessness and touchiness of a boy. He showed respect to the local officials and to the monks only. To every one else he was an equal. Wealth or learning might extort admiration but not subservience. However, there was very little of either. The poorest man could live in independence, the wealthiest could not do much more. This is the condition of very primitive people only.

But the Burmans are a primitive people. They are a very young people. There are certain marks and signs by which physiologists can determine the relative youth or age of a race. One of these is the physical differentiation between boys and girls. In early races it is slight, as a race grows old it develops.

If you dressed a Burman boy of eighteen in a girl's dress, or a Burmese girl of the same age in a boy's dress you could not distinguish quickly true from false. Face and figure and voice are very similar. In an old people such as the French, or the Brahmans in India, a boy begins to differ from a girl very early indeed. Their faces seem almost different types, their figures even at twelve could not be disguised by any clothing, their voices are utterly different.

The Burman race is in its childhood.

Then, again, it has developed so far under very strange conditions. Shut in by mountain walls and by the sea and swamps, it has never been overrun.

New races have not flowed over theirs and made strata such as the Normans in England, the Vandals in Spain, the Brahmans in India. They have been left to themselves. They are homogeneous to an extraordinary degree. A few Chinese traders were all the foreign community ever found throughout Upper Burma except in Mandalay. And these Chinese took Burmese wives and became Burmanised. Burma was and is all Burmese, but India is an extraordinary mixture, a jumble of races, castes, creeds, and civilisations.

Thus all foreign influences were conspicuously wanting, and as all new ideas come from without, the state of society remained very primitive. The laws of marriage and inheritance were those of early India as laid down in the Laws of Manu, which came to Burma with Buddhism.

Some of the administrative ideas and names were Chinese, as for instance the name of a governor, *Wun*, from the Chinese *Wong*, shows.

But there were no social or caste distinctions at all. There were no divisions. There was no aristocracy of birth or race, no sacred caste, no religious sects, no fighting caste, no trading guilds, hardly any provincial differences. They were peculiarly friendly to strangers, because such were few and had never done any one any harm. But they were peculiarly dense to new ideas, because such ideas had never come to them in any forcible form. They had the omniscience and arrogance of a boy who hardly believes any world can exist outside his garden wall; who thinks he is the

receptacle of all knowledge, and who has no fear, because he does not know what numerous things there are to be afraid of outside.

They were people one got to like very much, for their insouciance, their freedom from care, for the courage with which they faced the world. They were as children who had not yet been to school.

CHAPTER IV

SUSPENSE

THERE was trouble between the Burmese Government and the timber Corporation. It is unnecessary to go into it. The Burmese Government charged the Corporation with all sorts of offences against their leases. The quarrel was referred to the Government of India. And gradually a state of tension grew up that could end only in a war. There were many other grievances on either side, and this was deemed a good moment to settle them. Thus the quarrel between a trading Company and King Thibaw's officials over teak-logs became the occasion of a war, became the determining incident that led these people into that great school we call the Indian Empire.

Not, of course, the cause. What are the causes of things? Why does the flood come upon the plain? Why do the rain-clouds come and go; why do the rivers flow? Because there are forces that drive them, forces that come from the unknown, that exist, no one knows whence nor why. Why do nations grow and spread, why has half Asia been given into our hands to-day? No one will ever know. As heat raises the

clouds, as gravity pulls the rivers, so has it been with us. We have come because we had to come. We too, as drops of water, obey great forces that we never understand. Our fate leads us, and what we call 'the cause' makes but the difference of a year or two.

The immediate occasion of great events may be often very trivial, they are never very enlightening. The real causes are great trains of facts that go back to the beginning of things, that have their explanations only on the knees of the gods.

But it made some difference to us in Ningyan that we were the ostensible cause.

Even when I came up in May there were danger-signals flying. Away up in Mandalay there was talk and threats of many things. But that was ten days' journey off, and in Ningyan the local officials were our friends. They had good reason to be so, and the people knew little and cared less.

Still there were rumours. There was to be war, and if so we were the cause. Those who disliked us talked. There were difficulties now and then hard to smooth over. We became later more careful how we went about. In the streets, sometimes insults and threats were called after us. It was not pleasant. It was in September that the first significant event occurred.

There is a great festival then. It is the feast of the end of Buddhist Lent, when the rains are over and the skies are beautiful once more. It is the gayest festival of all the year, and lasts for several days.

The market square was near our houses, and in the centre a great trophy had been raised. It had a golden spire, and panels painted with scenes from classic plays. I remember these panels were painted by the governor himself, who showed them to us, proud of his ability. Round this building were piled all the presents for the monks. It was a strange assortment—food of all kinds, rice and fruits and vegetables, English tins, strange beasts formed in paste, clothes and toys and gilded kites. Of course, the monks had no use for many of the offerings, but they looked gay. In a great procession the monks came through the town in the morning to take them. And when they had gone the spire was surrounded by a maze. It was of bamboo lattice, and the outer walls, some two feet high, rose by gradations to the centre.

At night the whole was outlined by little lamps placed on the bamboo rails.

And all about were shops where refreshments were sold ; there were side-shows of curiosities and monstrosities, of two-headed calves, and there were conjurers. There were plays, both real and marionette. The whole place was crowded with people in gay dresses, laughing, trying to get in and out of the maze, singing and enjoying themselves. We went out to see it.

I remember we thought it very pleasant, we enjoyed ourselves, although that very day we had heard rumours that we were to be all arrested and sent in chains to Mandalay. It was impossible to think that any harm

could come from people who were so happy and so gay.

Suddenly, out of the crowd, a man came pushing towards us. It was one of our durwans. He told us the gates had been opened by the new soldiers, and that our place was now entirely in their hands, and that the commander asked for us. We turned back.

We feared the worst. We thought it meant instant arrest at least. Orders from Mandalay perhaps. A new regiment had arrived from there to-day, we knew. Well, we must go and see.

The manager, I remember, was away somewhere up the forest. There were only three of us in Ningyan. The senior took command and we went in. We found the gates, usually so carefully closed, wide open. Some untidy soldiers stood as sentries. The houses were dark. But on the lawn-tennis court there was a blaze of light. There, in a chair surrounded by torch-bearers and swordsmen, we saw a man sitting. It was the commander, and we went to him. He was young, I remember, a pleasant-faced, even-tempered fellow He was a dandy. His clothes were of the finest silk embroidery in the latest fashion, his sword was golden-sheathed, with jewelled pommel, and he wore earrings of big diamonds.

We concealed our apprehension and asked him why he came. He said to visit us. We said that we were honoured. Then we had refreshments brought, and did our best to entertain our visitor, admiring his jewels and his arms.

Still, all the same, we were not free from anxiety. For this is the Oriental way, not to rush into business in too much of a hurry. There is always lots of time, and etiquette must be observed.

After the first formalities were over, it was quite likely he would demand the surrender of our money and our arms. We had large sums of money in the safes. Or when he went away he might invite us to go with him.

It seemed as if his visit lasted hours. He was just come from Mandalay, from the Court, and was full of gossip. He told us stories of the King and Queen. He showed his diamond earrings, presents from the Queen, he said, and laughed. He flashed his diamond ring across the red light of a torch. Who gave it him? A lady. Then his sword. The King had handed it to him in full durbar. He was to use it on the King's enemies.

We said we did not know the King had any.

At this the soldier laughed.

'Don't you know that war is nearly come?' he asked.

We looked surprised.

'With whom?'

'With the foreigners,' he answered; 'with your Government. Did you not know? Oh yes! And on your account, too, about this timber you have been stealing all these years.'

Then he drew the sword and looked at the edge. 'It's a good sword,' he said, again putting it up.

We stood him drinks—we stood all his escort drinks, although it was against their religion, but then so is it to be a soldier. We placated them with courteous words. We assumed an air of indifference and calmness we were far from feeling. We even asked him questions.

'What were his orders?'

He said he had none yet. When he had he would let us know.

Then at last, after midnight, he went away. He swaggered out of the gateway with his gold and jewels gleaming in the lights. He took with him his swordsmen and his musketeers. We shut the gates, and wondered when the orders he spoke of were likely to arrive.

I saw that officer several times again before the war. What happened to him later I never heard. Where is the golden sword and where the jewelled bowl? Where are the earrings? I fear that he was killed. The gold perhaps is hidden in the ground, forgotten. Where is the lady of the ring? Grown old and sewing coats may be in some slum of Mandalay to earn a living. Who can tell?

The rumours grew quickly worse.

There were two things we were afraid of. One was that orders might come from Mandalay to seize us and send us there. The other was that bad characters or daring men might muster courage to break into our compound and seize all our money.

In the former case we knew that there was little chance that we should ever reach Mandalay alive.

The heat, the chains, the want of food such as we could eat, would be enough without any violence. In the latter case we should probably be killed instantly. Our place was perfectly indefensible. The fence was a rotten bamboo railing, and a thrown torch could set fire to our houses anywhere.

So the days passed. The other men came in from camp, and we were all gathered in Ningyan.

At last, at the end of October, we suddenly got orders. We were to go. The time was up. War was about to be declared, and we must seek safety on our own side of the frontier.

We were divided into two parties, with different duties.

The manager, with most of the assistants, was to ride down to the frontier and see the elephants across. There were a large number—over thirty, I think—and their value was very considerable. It was expected that there would be trouble. The Burmese mahouts would probably refuse to cross to the British side, and would desert—might perhaps take the elephants with them—and the officials would probably obstruct the passage.

My duty, with another assistant, was to take down the office records and books, the mortgages and deeds, the valuables and specie. The last amounted to about three lacs of rupees. We were to go down by river. All the things were loaded into carts, and we started out to go down the five miles to where the launch and boats awaited us on the Sittang.

We went off about midday. No one obstructed us. But as we passed slowly through the town the people gazed. Sometimes they called after us threats and abuse—mostly they were silent.

The road was, as always, terribly bad. The mud was deep. The water from the creek had overflowed all the country and made it into a swamp. The grass was in places eight or nine feet high. It took us five hours to get down to the village over the river, and then it was late evening.

I remember we had a discussion then what we should do. The Burmese clerks and boatmen said it was too late to start. You could not go at night, and it would be nearly dark before we could be ready.

But we determined to be off. We were in a hurry —we had private information that messengers from Mandalay, ordering our arrest, were on the way. Any moment they might arrive. Any moment we might be seized; or even if no messenger arrived, the local people, if they had time to think, might attack us for the money we had with us. Our friend, the governor, was far away and could not help us.

I remember as we waited the slow loading of the boat that we kept looking back. Behind us the trail stretched across the muddy flats, now crossing an open place, now lost in grass. We watched by turn, fearing to see some horseman suddenly appear.

The launch was ready, and we had determined what we would do. Abandoning the boat, we would cut the launch free and go. She held the money and the most

valuable papers. We might escape with her. Anyhow we would try.

All of a sudden a horseman did appear. He came riding quickly, splashing through the wet hollows, covering himself with mud.

We very nearly started. But there was something about the man and pony familiar. He did not seem to be a soldier, did not seem to be an official. We waited, hands on ropes, to determine, and when he came nearer we recognised the pony. It was one of our own men with a message from Ningyan.

'Do not delay,' it said, 'get off at once. I hear that orders from the Court are expected before the night.' We worked harder.

But at last, when all was safe on board, it was nearly dark. Within the shadow of her banks the river was already grey. Faint mists began to rise, and the launch serang said he could not start. We should go aground.

However, we insisted, and just as the sun set we swung out into the current. We took the boat in tow and headed down the river. The stream was fast, and rounding a curve, we passed quickly out of sight. Then half an hour later, when the dark had come, we moored alongside the bank in a place far from a village. The forest came close down to the water, and the river was between us and the road.

Before we slept we decided on our plans. We took the money and hid it under the wood bunkers, all but a few hundred rupees we kept for use. Our guns also

we hid, as it was forbidden to take firearms across the frontier, and their discovery might cause our detention. But we could get at them quickly. Our revolvers we put under the seats. Then we discussed what we should do when we came to Mehaw, the river frontier post. Should we steam quickly past and chance being fired at? Should we go in? The river is very narrow, and we could not get out of range even if we kept over the other side. Still we might do it.

What, however, decided us not to try was the warning we had received not to stir up trouble if we could help it, because of the other men going down by road. We might get past, but if we did so illegally, revenge might be sought by stopping the other party. It is best to let sleeping dogs lie.

The early morning was misty and it was late when we started. But the distance was not great, and we rounded the point above Mehaw about ten o'clock. A gun was fired as a warning to us to stop. But we had already decided to do so, and we turned round and moored under the bank; then we were boarded.

They made a complete search of the launch and found nothing. They made a search of the boat astern and apparently found nothing. Then we asked leave to proceed, and were refused.

What the reason was we could not guess. We reasoned, but without avail, we argued, we tried to coax. But no, we could not go. Had orders been received to detain us? we asked; but we could get no answer. We could not go, and that was all.

About two o'clock they said that not only we could not go on, but must go back. War was near and we were suspicious people. We must go back to Ningyan, to the governor to abide his orders. We said we wouldn't. Who dared to give us such an order? we asked. They said it was the post commander. Then I said that I would like to see him. It appears he was in a house on the bank above and would receive me. So I went out.

I found him seated in a verandah with his sword-bearer and his gun. He did not seem at all truculent, and I thought I would soon persuade him. But he was firm. We could not go. It appears we had broken the law, as two guns had been found in the clerks' boat. That was against the law.

I said I was very sorry, but it was my ignorance.

The commander said such ignorance was culpable.

I asked to what extent it was culpable, and he replied that in Ningyan it was culpable to the extent of fifty rupees.

Until then I had been afraid we were in for some serious trouble. But when I saw the old man's eyes twinkle I became suddenly reassured. Poor old fellow, official pay was small and hard to come at, and, after all, one must live. I said that capitals were more expensive than outposts, and a fifty-rupee offence at Ningyan could be only a twenty-rupee offence at Mehaw. I was quite willing to pay that. But the commander said that I was wrong. There would be the expense and trouble of remitting the money.

Again he winked. There was no post. He would have to send a special escort. He estimated this at five hundred rupees. Two offences at fifty rupees each made a hundred rupees, costs, etc., five hundred, total six hundred. Would I pay six hundred and go?

I forget now what we compromised for. But we each made concessions and gradually we agreed. We became excellent friends and drank to each other's health. Then I returned towards the launch. On the way down I met my companion coming up. He said he heard that I was killed. I laughed and told him what had happened. We sent up the money and a bottle of whisky.

Well, we got off at last. The post commander waved a friendly tumbler to us as we went down stream. A turn and we were out of sight. And an hour later we were safe beyond the frontier. Next day we reached Toungu.

A few days later, the very day war was declared, the manager and others came in. They had got across safely with the elephants, but they had met with adventures. Most of the elephant riders had deserted, and they had been obliged to ride the beasts themselves. They had never ridden elephants before, and said it was a new experience. It had taken them two nights, but at length they had got all across. So we were all safe.

And when we heard later of how three of our men had been killed upon the Chindwin, through a misunderstanding, and the others put in prison and

threatened with death, we felt we had good reason for congratulation. For the messengers from Mandalay did reach Ningyan but a few hours after we had left.

. . . .

I do not think any facts could better illustrate the Burman kingdom and the people than our escape. The slackness at headquarters, the want of energy of the officials in distant places, the indifference of the people. Think what would happen in any other country? Would any one holding our position have got away? Would not the government have arrested them at once; would not the people have risen against them?

The Burman kingdom was that of children. It was full of good intentions, full of great weaknesses, full of the faults of childhood. A month later it had disappeared.

But the people stayed, and for twenty years now have known another master. They have come out of their nursery into the world. They have learnt new knowledge and new discipline, they have opened their eyes to wider horizons, they have entered into the arena of competition and of change. They have learnt much, they have forgotten much, they have grown in many ways.

And what this is that they have learnt, what they have forgotten; whither this road leads that they then entered on, we are all surely concerned to know. For now that they have entered our school, what affects them affects us; and whatsoever leads us to

a better knowledge of them, must in the end help us to a better knowledge of ourselves. If they have done well, may we not claim some of the credit; and if they have failed, may not the fault be partly ours as well as theirs?

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT RIVER

In July 1886, seven months after the annexation I came up to Mandalay.

The only way then was by river steamer from Prome, a journey that lasted four days; and everything in the journey suggested war. Although we never stopped except at posts held by our troops, yet we had machine-guns in the bows, and an infantry guard on board the steamer. And all day long as we passed up slowly stemming the current, now under one bank, now under another, we knew that we might be attacked. We might be fired into from the cover of groves, of pagodas, or of sandbanks, never seeing perhaps our foe. It had happened to other steamers now and again.

Our passenger-list consisted almost entirely of soldiers. There was a colonel of British infantry going to his regiment beyond Mandalay, there were two subalterns rejoining from the base, there was an intelligence officer who landed wherever we touched, and came back full of notes and information.

And there were two or three of those waiters on

Providence whom a war attracts now as it has ever done.

One I remember well. He came of some good family at home, which he had quitted years before. He had been, he told us, many things. Once he had been a boot-black, in Melbourne, earning, he said, a not unreasonable profit. He had dug in New Zealand for kauri gum, that fossil product of long-vanished trees. He had washed sheep and herded cattle and broken horses. And his last address had been boiler No. 23 Sydney wharf. After all, he said, a boiler is not such a bad place to sleep in. You get privacy and shelter, and when you shut the boiler it is so dark you might imagine yourself anywhere.

What numbers of men there were who came, like him, hoping to find an opening in this new country. Some of the men were good and obtained here just that opportunity they lacked. They were the men for new countries, and this new country kept them, to its benefit and theirs. Some there were very much the reverse. Yet many were picturesque rascals, and I miss them somehow in this well-ordered province now.

There was the Irrawaddy pirate, he of the insinuating address and charming manners. He held a minor appointment in the police for a year or two, and robbed systematically every one he could. There was the 'White dacoit,' a brother of his, if not by blood, yet by nature, though he lacked the former's manner. There was Signor Beato, who became perhaps the best-known figure in Burma later. A man with a history of

adventure going back to the Crimea. He had made many fortunes and lost them. There were few countries he had not been in. He came to Mandalay with a partner and ten pounds. He stayed to make much money, first by photography, and then in other ways. He was a man quite unlike any other, and Mandalay is different now he is gone. There were many others. Most of them came but for a time, and vanished.

My fellow-passenger, he of boiler 23, attracted much attention on the steamer. He took the lead easily, and told every one what he should do. He told the soldiers how to wage the war and how to restore peace. He told the civil officers how to govern. He had a most varied knowledge for a boot-black. He played cards for fairly high stakes with every one who would. He became quite a personage. And when I heard afterwards in Mandalay that he had only been offered an inspectorship of police on £8 a month, I felt how true it was that governments rarely know how to appreciate merit.

He did not retain even that appointment long ; there were difficulties, I believe. Anyhow, he left ; but whether he subsequently gained distinction in fields better fitted to his abilities, or whether he returned to boiler No. 23, I cannot say. I have never been able to go to Sydney and inquire.

The voyage, as it happened, was without incident. No one fired on us, and we therefore fired on no one. Do not think this last was a necessary consequence of the first, for mistakes were stated to have occurred.

Villagers escaping from an accidentally burning village were supposed to be the dacoits who had set fire to it, and were fired on by machine-guns—an inconvenient error only palliated by the fact that no one was hit. Therefore steamers were ordered in future to mind their own affairs. If fired on, they might reply. If not, then a non-committal attitude was to be adopted. I remember one energetic passenger saying, disconsolately, that it reminded him of Dr. Watts's hymn—

Whene'er I steam to Mandalay
How many daks I see,
But as I never fire on them,
They never fire on me.

'Dak' was a pet diminutive for 'dacoits,' by which we indicated these Burmans who were dissatisfied with our proclamation of annexation and strove to make it of no avail.

When we stopped for the night we went eagerly on shore and asked for news, but there was little news going. There were skirmishes daily somewhere or other, but mostly of small account. No movement of troops was going on. In fact, the army of occupation was then limiting itself to maintaining its positions, awaiting the cold weather, when heavy reinforcements would arrive and we could extend our influence.

And, generally speaking, the country was quiet, but we understood clearly enough that no progress had yet been made in the way of pacification. We held the rivers to Bhamo with a long chain of forts, and had a few at important places inland, but they dominated

only the area within range of their rifles, and the country was, as yet, completely hostile. The hostility was, however, more or less inert just then. A few months later it broke out.

The night before we arrived at Mandalay we stayed at Myingyan.

This is a town near the confluence of the Chindwin river and the Irrawaddy. It was then the headquarters of a brigade, and full of troops. The river ran close in under a high bank.

There was then, and for some time later, an agitation in the Rangoon press to make Myingyan the headquarters of our Government in Upper Burma instead of Mandalay. It was averred to be a growing place of immense capabilities, a certain centre of trade and wealth in the rising future. And Government was sternly taken to task for its blindness in not seeing this.

Well, I passed Myingyan a few days ago. It has not grown. It has even fallen off. There are no troops there now, and only five Europeans. The trade has not come. But, instead, the river has gone away. A desolate sandbank, two miles broad, now divides it from the steamer ghaut. And Mandalay remains the capital. The economic revolution is not yet, and this is but an instance of many things. There have always been those who prophesied that English rule would revolutionise the East ; that the past was passed, and the future in our hands to shape it. We have built railways in straight lines, careless of the towns we avoided, saying the towns would come to it ; they

have not come. We have projected new trade-routes to kill the old; they have not died. We have introduced new ways, new thoughts, new faiths—but the old live. And though we are masters, yet is our power limited. If we move, it can be only in the ancient ways. Charm we never so wisely, the East shuts her ears and goes her own way.

We left Myingyan at daylight, and passing the old capitals of Sagaing, Ava, and Amarapura, we came, at nearly dark, to Mandalay shore.

The city is not upon the shore—it lies three miles inland.

It is said that King Mindon, when he founded Mandalay in 1859, placed it far from the river so as not to hear the steamer whistles, and so that his palace might not be liable to be shelled by British gunboats, as the old palaces were.

There may be truth in this or there may not. But even if he had not objected to the steamer whistles, he could not have founded Mandalay upon the river-bank.

For the bank there is not like what it is at Ava or Amarapura or Sagaing, firm and strong and above high-flood level. It is, for a mile or more, below high floods, and a great embankment had to be built to protect it. But the low land was never secure.

We slept on the steamer that night, and next morning early we landed on this bund.

It was crowded with men and stores, with troops and followers and coolies, with mules and horses and bullocks. It seemed a perfect chaos.

There was, of course, no hotel to go to; so out of this confusion I got a bullock-cart for my servants and luggage, a bullock-carriage for myself, and I started to report myself at headquarters at the palace.

There is an electric tram running now, and the streets are full of pony-gharries. The roads are metalled and fairly even, and they are swept and drained.

In those days the only conveyance was the bullock-carriage.

This was a gay square box on wheels drawn by a pair of bullocks. You sat cross-legged upon the floor, and your head nearly touched the roof. If you got cramped and tried to stretch yourself, your limbs went through the door and windows, and caught in the wheels or in other carriages. Therefore they were cramped and hot and uncomfortable; but they were picturesque, gay with colours, while the modern pony conveyance is hideous.

The roads were straight and broad, but deep in ruts and mud. Rubbish was freely thrown into them. Pigs wallowed there, and dogs wrangled over refuse. The people seemed disengaged and indifferent, if not exactly happy. The streets were busy, and there was about the town that air of being a capital and not a country town which all capitals have.

As to wherein the difference lies, I have never been able to be certain.

What differentiates a busy street in Birmingham or Liverpool from one in London?

What style has Paris that Marseilles lacks? Why are you always quite sure New York is not a capital, but only a business city?

It is not public buildings, it is not wealth, nor tidiness, nor luxury, nor stir. I think it is something in the people. Manchester now is vastly greater than London was a hundred years ago. Yet a Mancunian is a provincial and a Londoner never was.

It must be something in the manner and carriage and dress of the people, also in the variety. Provincial towns suffer from sameness and dulness, but capitals are cosmopolitan and freer.

Whatever it is, Mandalay had it then. The roads were mere tracks, the houses no better than in Ningyan, there were no public buildings to be seen, as they were all within the city walls. But the people looked as if they were cleverer, brighter, more urbane. There was a mixture of peoples, Chinese and Shans and Indians, with all the mixtures between. There were strange costumes, strange conveyances, strange houses, strange temples now and then. And nothing attracted any notice. The city was accustomed to strangeness. It was *blasé*—man of the world.

In the few succeeding days when I knew Mandalay better I noticed this still more. You met all sorts of strange peoples here. There were ministers or ex-ministers passing on horseback with trains of followers, there were plays going on at the street corners, there were women in the gayest silks seated in bullock-carriages. Everything was purely Oriental. You

never saw a European boot or umbrella, or a saddle on a horse. The roadside stalls were all full of native goods. The city had its own purely Oriental life, amid which the patrols of our troops passed as utter strangers.

There was a fascination and romance about it. The city was a living entity, with a strange, gay, varied life of its own untouched by Western tawdriness.

But now nearly all this is gone.

The King is gone and all his Court and all his ministers, and with them has gone all style and fashion. The dresses are dull now, because there is no Court to make them gay. The manners have deteriorated, because there is no Court to dictate their observance.

Cheap European goods are evident everywhere. A native Court would not tolerate such things as patent-leather shoes or Cawnpore saddles or shoddy umbrellas ; and what courtiers do, the people imitate.

When I remember Mandalay then and now I cannot think that it has gained. Electric trams and metalled roads are but a poor exchange for national taste in dress, for a high standard of manners, for the organised life of an Oriental capital.

And yet withal she still remains the social capital of Burma. She stills sets the fashions and in all the native arts she leads the taste. Yet she is very poor, and growing poorer. She has no Court to bring money to her. She has no ministers to buy her goods and to keep open houses. She has fallen in many ways. Romance and she are strangers. And instead of the

daily gossip of the Court, the intrigues and plots, the movement of great affairs, she has but a municipal water scheme or a village scandal to interest herself in. It is hard to keep up your prestige on that.

The Golden City they used to call her. There is little gold about her now.

After three miles through these streets we came to the city.

It has been often described, its great red-brick walls over a mile square and thirty-five feet high, its red-lacquered guard-houses on the walls, the drawbridges, and about all the lotus-covered moat.

The drawbridges were down, but the gates were strongly held. There was a company of native troops at the gate I entered; I saw close by a field battery. Troops were quartered here and there in unburnt buildings, for nearly all the buildings in the city between the palace, which stood in the centre, and the walls had been burnt down. There was a bare black waste all round the palace walls, except on one side, where some monasteries—now occupied as barracks—had escaped. It looked dreary and desolate to a degree. And the great gold spire of the 'centre of the universe' rose up from the palace platform right before us. We passed through the triple stockades and walls and came through the gardens to the palace.

I found the Secretary to Government in a small room half full of great mirrors, and he invited me to stay with the Chief Commissioner's staff in the palace till I could leave for the station to which I was posted.

CHAPTER VI

MANDALAY

THE palace in Mandalay was then the centre of power and administration in Upper Burma. The General had his headquarters there, and the rooms formerly occupied by queens and maids of honour, by ministers and pages, were now full of officers in khaki. The throne-rooms were offices, the great reception-room was the mess.

Sir Charles Bernard, the Chief Commissioner, also resided in the palace.

For it must be remembered that Upper Burma was never under martial law. From the time that annexation was decided on, two months after the first columns came up, the country was assumed to be under civil rules. It was hoped and believed that we could take over the government as a going concern. The King was displaced by a Chief Commissioner, but the ministers, or some of them, were to remain in power. The government was to be carried on through them, and they were to transmit the necessary orders to the officials throughout the province. The old administration was in a way to be kept going till

gradually displaced by one after the pattern of Lower Burma.

It will be seen that it was assumed that the Burmese officials would readily transfer their allegiance from the power that was to the power that is; and as to the people, it was not supposed that they counted. Indeed, judging by Indian precedents, they would not count. Throughout our conquest of India we had but to reckon with the existing government. When we overthrew it, the struggle was ended. The people always accepted as ruler whoever was strong enough to upset the previous ruler. They stood by indifferent while princes and generals fought out their battle. Then the winner stepped into his predecessor's shoes, and all was over. In all India there was never any nation. Nowhere in India has anything like a popular movement occurred, except in the Mutiny. The strongest power we met was the Sikh Khalsa. But that was not a nation, it was a religious organism; and the army once overthrown, the country fell completely into our hands. The arbitrament of the sword was always accepted as final. The Indians throughout the peninsula were so accustomed to foreign masters, so utterly lacking in anything approaching a national spirit, that it never occurred to them to even express an opinion as to whom they wished to be ruled by.

Therefore, according to all Indian precedent, having overthrown King Thibaw, our fighting should be practically at an end. Little troubles there might be; we could not expect everything to go smoothly at first.

We had taken over the government, and all that remained was to settle ourselves down.

Therefore any semblance of martial rule was quite uncalled for. The civil government was already in power, Upper Burma was annexed, every Upper Burman was a subject of the Queen, the principles of criminal and civil law were to be observed, and the troops were there, not to conquer, but only to support the civil power. No state of war existed. If any one made any disturbance, he was to be dealt with under the penal laws. Thus, if he fired on our troops, he attempted to commit murder; if he killed any one, he was a murderer. If an insurgent band arose and levied on the villagers for supplies, they were 'robbers,' and so on.

Thus arose a very astonishing nomenclature. The insurgents were 'dacoits,' that is, organised robbers and murderers. They were liable to all pains from death down to imprisonment. All prisoners taken were liable to be tried by ordinary law, and hanged or sent to penal servitude. They were considered as ordinary malefactors. While on our side any one killed in action was popularly said to be murdered.

Not of course by our soldiers. They took things as they found them. That is to say, they found a state of war, and no legal fiction could persuade them of anything else.

Indeed, I heard one well-known soldier speak very freely his mind on the subject. Two officers had been killed in an attack on a post, and the news appeared

in the papers as 'Murder of Captain X. and Lieutenant Y. by dacoits.'

'Murder,' he said. 'What do they mean by "murder"? This is a war, and we are soldiers, not constables. We are here unasked, and these people they call dacoits have every right to kill us if they can by any methods known to war. We also can kill them in return. *A la guerre comme à la guerre.* But to talk like this. Can anything be more contemptible? Either this is a war or it is not. If not, then I am going to resign. I did not engage to be a thief-catcher, and if shot in action, to have it written on my tombstone that I was murdered.'

But of course there was also much to be said on the other side.

An army fights an army, a soldier meets a soldier. Only a soldier can claim a soldier's privileges. And our opponents were not soldiers. They had no organisation, no discipline, no recognised leaders. They were guerrillas, like the Spaniards in 1800 and like the Franc-tireurs in 1870. They were beyond the scope of military convention. While we were bound by all the rules of warfare, they were bound by none. No amount of defeats would be any permanent use, because there was no one to authorise a surrender or enforce it. Therefore there was no alternative but to do as was done in Upper Burma—to treat the insurgent as a rebel, and to try and build up an administration as early as possible.

The position was difficult, and it created at the time

some friction. The soldier said, 'I am at war, what is the civilian doing here? What has he got to do with it?'

And the civilian said, 'This is my district. Your troops are only here to support the civil arm, and to do what I want.'

The soldier wanted his prisoners treated as prisoners of war. The civilian wanted them handed over to him to try by the ordinary process. And I may say here that if I were a conquered country, and had any choice as to the hands into which I should fall, I would decide for the army. Soldiers may in times of excitement forget themselves, but such occasions are very rare, and their usual attitude to an enemy is forbearing and kind-hearted. While striving to win, they honour those to whom they are opposed, and they can sympathise with their foe. They are chivalrous, and they never bear malice. If they are defeated or suffer loss, they take it as the fortune of war and they may desire to get even; they never seek after revenge.

For though the profession of war may be at times a cruel one, so must also be that of the surgeon and physician.

What the surgeon's knife is to the diseased body, that is the soldier's sword to the diseased nations.

And as doctors are the kindest of men, as with them the acquaintance with suffering and death leads not to hardness and cruelty but to compassion and care, so it is with the soldier. What does brutalise is the ignorance of death, the fear of it, either to inflict or

to receive. The emperor who wept over the first death-sentences he had to confirm, ended by enjoying massacres.

Long peace does not make nations or men more humane, but less. It makes them weak, and weakness is the root of all brutality.

At this time, July 1886, both sides were keeping quiet and waiting for the cold weather. Our Government was awaiting the end of the rains, the arrival of cavalry and large numbers of infantry to begin operations inland from the river. The Burmese people were slowly making up their minds. At first they hoped that we would soon go away of our own accord and leave them alone. Now they began to realise that we meant to stay, and as they did not want us, they were slowly determining to turn us out.

They were realising also that if any action was to be taken, they must take it. Their officials failed them altogether. Chosen from the bulk of the people, they had the confidence of no one. They were not leaders in any way.

There is nothing a democracy distrusts so much as itself. Where the theory is that all men are equal, how can one be acknowledged as chief? How can discipline be enforced, how are you to find men who will lead, where no one has ever led?

In an extremity there is no asset so valuable to a people as a class who by tradition are the leaders to whom the mass of the people can turn with confidence and submit with willingness.

Now Burma was and is still an instance of the purest democracy conceivable. Its King gone, there was absolutely nothing left which had any permanence or value till you got down to the village commune. And therefore it was the villages which found they had to take up the war each on its own account.

All this I learned by degrees while I stayed in Mandalay and heard men talk. For all news came to the palace, and there was a continual coming and going of officers and troops, of civilians taking up their new appointments. There was frequent news from the districts, and incessant preparation for the cold weather.

And while I waited for orders I wandered about the palace and the gardens. They were little changed then from what they were when the King left them. No alterations had been made. The gardens were much as they had been when the King and Queen wandered there, and the palace rooms retained the brilliancy of their gold and crimson.

But it was very cramped. The three lines of stockade and wall that surrounded it shut out all view and all air. Upon the platform the buildings were very crowded. Many of them have now been removed, and the main buildings gain by standing clear. The removal of the walls has let in light and air ; the filling up of the Queen's Bath has improved the sanitation. But, of course, all these changes have taken away from its reality as a palace, and made it now only a show place. It is hard to-day to realise the stories and place the people. But when I saw it, all the rooms and

gardens retained the appearance of having been used quite recently. You could picture the maids of honour playing hide-and-seek and the King sitting in council. The background of the tales was there alive. And even in places it had been judiciously improved. A bloody hand-print in red sealing-wax upon a wall was a guarantee of good faith about the atrocities that was convincing. It was the *jeu d'esprit* of two young subalterns. But it has passed into many a book in Burma as a proof, if proof were wanting, of untold horrors. History is so easy to make, if you know what is wanted, and supply that want.

Orders have recently been passed to renovate the palace, to restore the principal rooms and the main buildings.

All those among us who care for the beauty of great columns, of lofty ceilings, of the glory of gold and crimson shown in the wonderful building, will be glad. It is not, of course, a marble dream like that of Delhi or of Agra. There is nothing like the Summer Palace. But it has its beauty, both in itself and for its history. Nothing like it will ever be built again. It is unique.

But some there are who would be glad to see it burnt. They think that it keeps alive amid the people memories that were better dead. They think that while it stands its sight will always bring to people old desires and hopes. It makes them restless, unhappy, discontented with that which is and must be.

For myself, I have no such opinion. That the

people should admire the old palace as the greatest building they ever built, as the greatest expression of their desires and tastes, does not seem to me harmful.

That they should regard it as a symbol that they were a nation, and that they are a nation, is not for harm but for good. With every sentiment of nationality a people rises, not falls; it is at the base of the higher moralities, why should we wish to hurt it? Which is more easily governed, which is more free from crime, which produces the better men and women: Upper Burma, where the feeling of nationality lives, or Lower Burma, where it has hardly ever existed? The difference is enormous, and the explanation is mainly from this cause.

It should be our part to increase it, not injure it; to draw men together, not separate them; to give them a coherence, and not to scatter them.

As for their old ideals, they are quite dead. No one dreams that they could revive. They belong to the past, and the people's face is now set other whither. But they wish to front the future as a people, and not as a crowd.

The palace helps them to remember this. They know this, and are grateful for its preservation.

After a few days I left Mandalay for my new station. To-day you can go there by rail in little over an hour; then it took three days.

The first day I went down again to the shore, and took a launch which ran down the Irrawaddy for some

way, and then turned up a tributary river which comes in from the east.

A few miles up this I disembarked at a small post held by some sappers, where I stayed the night. The next day I proceeded on my journey in a boat on the canal.

It was but a tiny canal. Where I entered the boat it was only some three yards broad, and it wound sinuously across the plain.

My escort marched on the bank, and sometimes I marched with them ; sometimes I got into the boat and rested. For the weather was not pleasant for exercise. An August day is about the worst possible for heat and oppression. The boat itself was towed by two boatmen, and we made about two miles an hour.

Before mid-day we reached another fortified post, and halted.

This place had been the scene of a gallant fight not long before. Three Europeans of the same timber corporation that I had served in, thinking the country quiet, had left Mandalay to return to their forest. They were escorted by a local official, and they thought themselves safe, no doubt. The idea that the people themselves might rise did not occur to many in the spring of 1886 ; and these men, being friendly with the local official, supposed all would be well.

But when they came to this place a band of insurgents attacked them. The official and his men fled, and the three Europeans with their servants were left to fight it out. They did so fight it all the day.

One of them, Gray, formerly a coffee-planter, and a great hunter, used his rifle to great effect. But numbers told. They were surrounded, taken in rear, and two were killed. Gray, when his ammunition was exhausted, was taken prisoner. He was afterwards killed in captivity—an act for which, later, we exacted retribution.

I was interested to see all the place, to see where they had lain to fire, to note the bullet-scars still in the pagoda walls.

And the officer commanding told me that in digging the ditch for the fort they found Gray's watch. How it came to be buried there no one knew. Perhaps he dropped it in the fight. It was sent, I believe, to his people in England.

That night I saw for the first time lamp-signalling. There were, of course, no telegraph lines about the country, and had there been, they would have all been cut. Yet it was very necessary to keep all posts in touch with Mandalay and with each other. This was done by heliograph and lamp-signalling. Almost every post was so linked up—some by circuitous routes. It depended on the lie of the land, on the hills, and on the facing. For the heliograph, though readable at great distances, can only be used when the sun is partly in front of you. When the sun is east you cannot signal west, for instance. And though you can signal east, you cannot get a reply.

But lamps can be used at night in any direction to and fro, and can be read twelve miles or so.

Therefore early every night all up and down the river, and at the outlying posts, the lamps winked messages. All kinds of messages came. First official telegrams, orders from the General, orders from the Chief Commissioner, messages about insurgents, about hospitals, about stores.

And when the official telegrams were finished, the signallers would gossip. They would send news of what was going on, of fights and marches. Fragments of news from home, of Reuter's messages, came through. And then came all sorts of talk—scandal perhaps, or jokes. I remember there can have been little or no scandal, because the field-force did not include a drawing-room; but there were plenty of jokes.

Many a time in little outposts we have gone up after dinner to the signalling station, upon a hill, or a pagoda, or even on a tree, and seen the news come twinkling through the night. The red eye, winking intelligently to us from far away, seemed a reminder that we were not quite forgotten. By light and electricity we were still in touch with home. I remember that night a heliogram coming through told us of a skirmish a few miles south of my destination. Evidently I was getting near. Next day another voyage on an ever-widening canal brought me to my station.

CHAPTER VII

WAR?

THERE were then in Kyaukse two companies of the Somersetshire Light Infantry and a Bombay Native Infantry regiment. A small stockade at the foot of the hill was occupied as a fort, but most of the troops were in monasteries in the neighbourhood, and the officers lived in small buildings partly up the hill.

It was a time of comparative peace. All the two months that I was in Kyaukse nothing happened. At an outpost farther south an occasional skirmish occurred, but in Kyaukse itself all was quiet. The country round was irrigated, and movements of troops were practically impossible until the cold weather.

But by collecting information, making maps, and so on, preparations were being made for the winter campaign.

The civil government was slight. An English deputy commissioner was stationed at Kyaukse, but his power existed only *in posse*. An old Burmese official retained some semblance of authority yet, and within a very limited radius civil rule might be said

to exist. But it was only administrative rule. Courts existed only nominally. We tried no cases, civil or criminal, and collected no revenue. Still at that time it almost seemed as if civil administration had taken root and would quickly spread. The country round was quiet. We rode out several miles without escort. Our communication with Mandalay was not interfered with, and supplies came in from the neighbourhood without difficulty. The huts in which we lived were quite unprotected by any defence or even a picket. The villagers seemed peacefully employed ploughing their fields. No one could have supposed that any trouble was brewing. Most stations in Upper Burma then were small as this was. The people seemed settling down slowly to the new state of things. A few months later all the country was ablaze—fighting was continual. The huts in the hill had to be abandoned, and no one could move out without a large escort. But I was not there to see.

In October I went to a place up the river called Shemmaga.

This village had recently been burnt down by the insurgents. It was a place where salt traders lived. And these traders, anxious only for money and quiet, had assisted the troops stationed there in many ways. For this they incurred the anger of the insurgent leader in the neighbourhood, who denounced them as unpatriotic. He threatened to burn the place and kill the principal men. He did so. When I came to Shemmaga it was a blackened waste. Half the inhabit-

ants had fled, the rest were homeless and starving. The Government gave them help.

It was very different there from Kyaukse. We lived in monasteries on a hill above the town surrounded by a breastwork. Sentries and pickets were on duty day and night. Sometimes the fort was fired into. Beyond the fort lay undulating barren ground with thorns and thin grass, through which roads led on to the inner country. In Kyaukse we rode out every morning whither we would, spearing the half-wild village dogs for want of pigs, and never thinking of danger.

In Shemmaga no one was allowed to pass beyond the pickets. The whole country inland was ablaze.

I was by title subdivisional officer. Now a subdivisional officer in a settled country has many duties. He is in charge of a large area of country. He sees to the collection of the revenue, he checks the assessments, he recommends remissions.

He is a magistrate, and he tries all cases but the petty ones, which go to his subordinates, or the big ones, which go to the Sessions Court. He is a civil judge to try civil cases. He is the president of the municipality. He has innumerable duties.

But here in Shemmaga my duties were much simpler. I acted as intelligence officer to the troops, and that was all. I got them what information I could find ; little enough, and most of it wrong, I fear. For I had only the reports of spies and general gossip to go on. We knew nothing of the country, had no

detailed maps, no history of the surroundings. The people shunned us, and when they told us anything it was usually untrue.

However, certain facts came out quickly. We were in a very hostile country. That was evident enough. You had only to go out a mile to observe it. The first time I went out with a small reconnoitring party we saw about half a mile off in the main road the body of a man fastened to a tree. There was an inscription on the corpse to the effect that he had been a traitor and so was killed. I found he was the headman of a neighbouring village who before I came had rendered some service to the troops.

A little farther we were fired on from some thick bush. Then we returned.

Our picket by the steamer ghaut was fired on once or twice.

Then our supplies were stopped. We could get neither fowls nor milk nor eggs. We lived on rations of tinned meat and biscuits. Bread there was none. Sometimes we had chupatties made out of flour in the Indian fashion. Whisky we could obtain sometimes from the steamers, but beer and soda were unknown. We thought reprisals necessary, and we tried. But to retaliate you must have some one to retaliate on ; to hit, you must be able to see ; you must know where to strike ; you must get at your enemy.

And we saw nothing. Day after day we marched out through these barren hills to the villages beyond and looked for foes. We found only villagers. They

tilled their fields and looked upon us curiously. When we inquired where the enemy was, they shook their heads and said they knew of none.

'Where are the dacoits?' we asked.

'What *are* dacoits?' they answered.

'Evil men with guns.'

They shook their heads blankly. They were all peaceful cultivators and never knew of such things.

Then we would annex as many fowls as we could find, leave a generous price upon some villager's porch, for we were very particular, and go on. And the peaceful cultivator would then unearth his gun and follow us to get a pot shot as we went back.

Organised enemy there was none.

The leaders were villagers, the rank and file were villagers. They would collect for some attack and then disperse. When you went out to look you found nothing. You could not attack, because there was nothing to attack.

It was like thrusting a spear through water that closed behind it and left no sign of its passage. We never seemed to gain anything, never got any farther in our task, and we became weary of this marching fruitlessly through the country. But although we could not meet him, the enemy existed none the less. There was always a small body of men with the leaders, and they camped now here, now there. When any enterprise offered, the numbers could be swollen rapidly to several hundred. But such a company could only be kept together for a few days. They had no organisation,

no commissariat, and but few guns, all muzzle-loaders. Their object was never to meet us in open fight, but to harass us on the march, to attack us at night, to boycott us and make our rule impossible. For they hoped against hope that some time we would go away.

Once, however, we nearly had a fight.

A man came in one morning to see me. He was a villager from ten miles away. I had never seen him before and knew nothing of him. But he said he had some information he wished to give me.

'About the insurgents?' I asked, when he had come into my hut and we were alone.

'Yes.'

'About Maung Yaing?'

'Yes.'

'Where is he?'

'About ten miles from here camped in a palm grove. He is collecting men again.'

'What for?'

But my informant did not know. He shook his head.

'He will attack somewhere,' he replied, 'but I don't know where.'

'How many men has he got now?'

'A hundred, a hundred and fifty, perhaps two hundred. I did not count. But I know that they are collecting fast. He ordered me to join.'

'And you refused?'

The man nodded his head.

'Will you come with me to show the way?'

'No.'

Of course he was afraid. He had relations and friends on whom vengeance would be taken even if he remained secure. Not only would he not come, but he did not wish any one to know that he had told me.

'If it is known,' he said, 'I shall be killed.'

I went to the officer commanding and told him. An hour later we marched out with sixty sepoys to see what we could do.

I remember it was terribly hot. October is one of the worst months of the year. There is no wind. A damp and breathless heat beats down, and the thunder-storms that pass only make it worse.

We reached the place about an hour before sunset. It was amongst low hills, and a large village stood in some open fields. Beyond the village lay a palm grove where a stream passed, and in this grove we supposed the enemy lay.

We advanced upon it rapidly but found it empty. There was no sign even of any number of men having been there. It lay in peaceful occupation of a few sugar-boilers.

We arrested the sugar-boilers, and then going to the village we arrested several of the villagers. We fixed our camp in some little monastery huts north of the village, for it was too late to return that night. After our usual dinner on grilled fowl and biscuits, I interrogated the prisoners.

Maung Yaing? They had never heard of him. Dacoits? What were they? Well, yes, they had

heard of them. They were evilly-disposed people. Now this village was a quiet, honest, peaceable place. It had no concern with such things.

The officer commanding was of opinion that, as usual, I had been sold. My information was all wrong.

'They come to you,' he said, 'and fill you up with weird stories, and you believe them. You tell us, and we march everlasting distances and nearly die. As to dacoits, I doubt if they exist.'

He wanted to release the prisoners.

But I objected. Somehow I thought that the information I had got was true. I thought the villagers lying. I thought it advisable to keep them till the morning. The officer agreed, saying it was my business and not his, and then we prepared for the night. He went and posted his sentries, and I went with him.

The camp was in a very awkward place. It was at the upper end of the village, which joined it. One side was open, but on the other two were pagodas scattered about behind which an enemy could assemble and find cover. However, we expected no trouble, or certainly we would not have camped there.

The sentries posted, we went back. The men were in a wooden building, and we slept in a little hut close by. I remember the floor was rotten, and we both fell through several times.

The night passed without incident. Next morning we released the prisoners and marched away.

But some time after I heard all about that night

and what occurred around us as we slept. A prisoner caught by the cavalry told me. He was one of the lieutenants of the band and was with Maung Yaing that night.

'The news,' he said, 'was quite true. We were all there, three hundred of us. Only not in the palm grove you went into, but one a mile farther on behind a rise of the ground.

'We saw you come two or three miles away, and we were ready for you. We had a breastwork, and we meant to fight. But of course we preferred not, as we cannot stand before you in daylight.

'However, you never came on to where we were. You went back to the village and camped. As soon as it was dark, we surrounded you. There were pagodas all about, and we hid behind them. We came up quite close to you. We could hear you talking, and see you quite distinctly at your camp-fire. We intended to wait till after moon-set, about two or three in the morning, and then rush into your camp with swords. We expected to kill you all.'

'Why didn't you try then?'

The man laughed. 'You have great luck. Do you remember the prisoners you made? Among them, by some extraordinary chance, you got two of our best men, who were in the village at supper. You also got several leading villagers. We expected you to release them before night. But you did not do so. Therefore we did not attack you.'

'Why?'

'We feared you might kill the prisoners if we did. Besides, the villagers besought us, saying their village would certainly be burnt afterwards. So we decided not. We thought we would attack you on your return march.'

'You did not even do that.'

'No, for when the daylight came we did not like the look of your rifles. You had a hundred men.'

'Sixty,' I said.

'All trained men with rifles. We had three hundred men truly, but only forty had guns, and they were muzzle-loaders. What chance had we?'

'Why, none,' I said, 'by daylight, but at night it would have been different. You missed your chance.'

In November a squadron of cavalry landed—Hyderabad Lancers.

But although we now could move about more quickly and more freely, we accomplished little. We dominated all the country, but we caught no one. We fired a few shots now and again, we raced about the fields on cold trails to no effect. The people remained as hostile as before. It was impossible to get any hold on them. We lost an officer of the Naval Brigade in an ambush and a few men. No one who has not tried it can imagine how difficult, how dispiriting it all was.

War is war. It is full of excitement; you win, you lose, you hit and are hit back, you have an object.

Here there was nothing of all this. Every one longed for a fight, but no fight came. We marched

and marched and countermarched. And after two months we were exactly as we had been. The soldiers were eager to find the enemy, to defeat him and end the war. The civilian was anxious to begin his work of reconstruction and assert his authority. And all either could do was to wear out his own and his horse's patience.

I can remember now even the everlasting weariness of getting up morning after morning in the dark and marching over bad roads, stumbling and falling and swearing, to find at the end that the insurgents had news of us and had gone.

We certainly captured a great many of their abandoned camps, but as a camp consisted merely of a few leaf-huts and some earthenware pots, the booty was not great.

And this reminds me of the bulletins.

It must be remembered that the troops were not in large bodies. They were split into innumerable little columns that marched about on their own account and sent in reports of their doings to the General. The civilian of course also reported to his superior. And it was very difficult to make their reports interesting.

'Monday. Marched ten miles, saw lots of villagers.

'Tuesday. Marched fifteen miles. Awfully hot. Ten men down with sun. Saw one dacoit in the distance, who fired a gun.

'Wednesday. Made a night march of twenty miles, saw considerable number of villagers. One sowar killed and two wounded by person or persons unknown.

'Thursday. Were attacked at night. Lost five men. Fired great quantities of ammunition. Result unknown.

'Next morning, Friday, spread out over the country, and found a Burman with a bullet wound. Said he got it accidentally.

'Saturday. Back to camp. Every one worn out.'

Now, such a report might be absolutely truthful and would contain all the information necessary to give, but it is manifestly unpicturesque. It might do credit to the writer's sense, but not to his imagination. And it would not certainly attract attention up above. Something after the following style is much better.

'Monday. The civil officer having informed me that a large body of insurgents were collecting at A., I immediately moved out with troops, as detailed below, and marched to B. to be within striking distance. Here we camped.

'Tuesday. Starting at 3 A.M., I made a swift and strategic march on the enemy's position, arriving before it at noon. This was masked by a grove of trees and some pagodas, and was very strong. After carefully reconnoitring the ground, I directed the infantry to charge it with fixed bayonets. The attack was completely successful, but the enemy's look-out had discovered us and alarmed them by firing a gun, so that when we entered the position we found it evacuated. Our casualties, ten men down with sunstroke. Enemy's loss unknown. We captured the whole of his camp equipage and commissariat' (two earthen pots, half a basket of rice, three salt fish).

'Wednesday. Before dawn we renewed our pursuit of the enemy, driving him twenty miles farther out in disorganised flight. In an encounter between the cavalry and the enemy's left wing we lost three men. The enemy's loss is large, estimated at a hundred or more. The insurgents are now quite demoralised and broken up.

'Thursday. We were vigorously attacked at night by the enemy in overwhelming numbers——'

And so on. It is wonderful what imagination will do to liven even work like this. Some men never came within ten miles of an insurgent leader but 'they very nearly captured the Bo.' They never found a pot of rice cooking in jungle but they 'had rushed a dacoit camp'; they never made a movement but what they were 'scouring the country.'

One gallant officer so distinguished himself with his pen that he obtained the name of Fitz Bulletin; and one civil officer rose into fame by capturing or killing the famous leader, Hla-U, once a week for a whole open season.

And so we took life fairly cheerfully, subsisting on fowls, tinned meats, and commissariat rum, and ever hopeful that some day we should have a fight and get a little nearer the end.

CHAPTER VIII

WUNTHO

MEANWHILE events had been moving rapidly everywhere. The period of rest and expectation had passed, and both sides were taking matters more seriously than they had, were more awake to the necessities of the times.

The Burmese people had risen throughout Upper Burma. In every district there was a ferment and a movement. Posts were attacked everywhere, convoys were fired on, every village was a centre of disaffection, and every villager was ready to fight. The old leaders increased their bands, and new leaders sprang up everywhere. A word as to these leaders.

It was made a reproach to the Burmese people that these leaders were frequently men who had been outlaws, even in the Burmese times. It was assumed, therefore, that their object was simply plunder, and that patriotism had little or no influence with them.

But, of course, the inference was wrong. For a people who have lost their natural leaders to turn to outlaws for help is not a peculiarity of the Burman, but is human nature all over the world. The outlaws

have had, presumably, some experience of fighting, and must, by their very profession, be men of a certain courage and influence. If they successfully defeat their own government, they could be able to lend help against a foreign one. And, as in many places the local officials had no experience of fighting and little influence, the people turned to the outlaw. Always a friend of the countryside, as Robin Hood in England, he became a national hero, and men flocked to him.

Elsewhere the leaders were old officials, such as the Revenue Wun in Ningyan, who became one of the most noted leaders of the time. Men sprang up out of nothing who in a month or two gained name and influence.

These men were, as a rule, the best and bravest of the people. They rose because they had courage, because they had ability, because they had the power of command. Their proceedings were often unconventional, but then that is a characteristic of guerrillas. They had often to weigh heavily on the people for men and arms and supplies, but such is the nature of war.

The people admired them and assisted them, covering their movements with a conspiracy of silence that was extraordinary.

But their power was very small. Each locality had its own leader, and they could never combine, never unite in any general movement. Their strength consisted in being of the people—being known to, and probably related to, many people in one area.

And this, too, was their weakness, because outside

that area they were unknown, could command no following, and had no authority. They were in their way the best men the country could produce.

It is one of the regrettable necessities of a war of annexation that the best men are always against you. The men who come in to you and help you are usually not the best. They are the time-servers, the fearful, those concerned for their money and for their property. They are useful to the conquerors, and in fact essential. They must be well treated and well rewarded. But, nevertheless, one's sympathies are with the others.

Fate, for its own good ends, may have ordained that a country is to be conquered, and the conqueror have no doubt that what he is doing will in the end be for the best for every one. He may be perfectly clear in his own mind that what he is doing is right. And yet he may be sorry at incidents that are inevitable to that conduct.

That our conquest of Burma was not only inevitable, but that it was the only way by which the people could be led out of the nursery into the world—could be conducted to a higher, stronger, wider life—I have never doubted. What Rome did for the Western world, that we are doing for the East. The people must come into our school, and there learn what England learnt long ago—first at the hands of the Romans, and then at the hands of the Normans. One might have much sympathy with the Burmese Herewards or Robin Hoods, but that must not prevent their suppression.

We never ceased to recognise that it was our opponents, not our friends, who deserved our respect. The first duty of every man is to his country, to fight for it and preserve it. A man who cannot be faithful to that, has little likelihood of being faithful to anything. We felt that it was those who resisted most strenuously who would, when all was over, be our best fellow-subjects of the Queen.

Therefore, on our side at least, there was never any bitterness in this war. We never became vindictive, never wished to humiliate, to injure or destroy. We wanted only that our supremacy should be recognised, and that there should be peace. We wanted to be friends. And I don't think that we felt surprised, or annoyed, or angry that the people resisted. They said to us in effect: 'If you are the stronger, come and show it; if you can beat us, come and demonstrate your power. You can't expect us to admit you as our rulers until you have proved that you can rule us. If you can conquer us, do so. But although you have overturned our government, we remain. Come on.' So Upper Burma rose and much of Lower Burma too.

As the people rose, troops came pouring over from India—cavalry, artillery, and infantry, more than forty thousand men. Columns were organised to sweep over the whole country up to the frontiers. Two of these columns were to proceed to Wuntho. The State of Wuntho lay far north, on the west of the river above Mandalay among the mountains. It was semi-

independent, and was ruled over by a prince who was called a Sawbwa. When our columns advanced on Mandalay in 1885 the young Sawbwa was living in the palace. But when we occupied the capital he fled to his own territory. Then he declared himself independent, set up a kingdom of his own, and proceeded to annex slices of the neighbouring country. To bring him to reason two columns were organised. One was to start from Shwebo and march up north, the other, assembling at a river station a hundred and fifty miles above Mandalay, was to cross a mountain pass and threaten him from the east.

With the latter column, which was the principal one, went the General and the chief civil officers. The former column was smaller, under a colonel, and I was ordered to accompany him. I received my orders at the end of the year, and in two days I was travelling up to join my column. It was six days' long marching up through the country. I had with me as I rode a few sowars, and my cart with my kit had a small infantry escort.

On the march I was alone, but every night I stopped in some post established by the advancing column. I overtook it in camp at a place called Sagyin. It was a desolate camp enough. All round was a thin, sparse forest, and in the middle a patch of rice-land. The fields were dry now, and on them were pitched the tents. A small, poor hamlet of some ten or twelve houses stood on the edge of the forest. No local supplies were to be obtained, and our rations were all

we got to eat. In addition to other discomforts, a cold rain came on which lasted three days. It turned the fields into a clammy swamp, and made us all wet and depressed.

We were waiting there for news of the other column. It was delayed in starting, and its road was more difficult. Our column had been ready some time, and we were only thirty miles or so from the objective—the town of Wuntho. We could easily have been there first. But the other column contained the General and the chief civil officers. We were only a support, and therefore we had to wait. With the column I found two interesting people. One was the Wun of Kawlin. This territory was just north of us and lay along the Wuntho frontier. It had been annexed by the Wuntho Sawbwa to his incipient kingdom, and the Wun had sought safety in flight. He now joined our column as an ally. He was a stout old man, and his family had been hereditary Wuns for generations. Kawlin was his family feof, and he felt his expulsion deeply. A treasure accumulated for many years had been taken, and he was now reduced to poverty. He was not himself a man of much intellect or character. But his eldest son was one of the best Burmans I ever met. He was a gentleman, courageous, courteous, and able. He was wounded twice while in our service, and two years later he died. The other strange character was a Catholic priest. There are scattered throughout Upper Burma communities formed from prisoners brought back by

the King Alompra from his conquests. From Syriam near Rangoon he had brought a number of half-caste Portuguese. From Siam he had brought some Danes and half-caste Danes with their Bishop. From Chittagong he had brought other prisoners.

To these communities he had given grants of land in various places, and they had built villages and settled down.

In time they became to all outward appearance Burmese. They wore the same clothes, spoke the same tongue, had the same customs and ways. But they retained their religion.

It was never a desire either of the Burmese kings or people to proselytise. In fact, they rather avoided it. They wished each man to follow that faith that he was born into.

Therefore these Christian communities were never persecuted. They lived in peace, and when they could they got their priests.

The history of the priests who came to minister to these colonies is a strange and interesting one. I have written it full length elsewhere.[1] At first they were cared for by the Benedictine monks of Italy, who sent them priests. But the invasion of Napoleon disorganised Italy, and the supply of priests came to an end. For many years they were without any spiritual guides. They lived alone, Catholics amid a Buddhist nation. But still they never lost their faith, they never became absorbed.

[1] In *Temple Bar Magazine.*

Individuals of course did so. The villages did not increase. When the young men left their homes and went into the Burmese world they in time fell into line with their surroundings. If the daughters ran away with Burmese boys, they took the religion of their husbands.

But the village itself remained Catholic, as a rule. At least no village ever turned Buddhist. Two or three abandoned all religion. Having no priests, they forgot their Christianity. Not being Burmese by blood, they would not become Buddhists. They fell into the condition of the savage, having no faith of any kind.

But the most remained staunch, and when the priests at last returned they were welcomed readily.

These priests are furnished now by the Société des Missions Etrangères at Paris. Mostly they are recruited from the Alpes Maritimes. And one such priest was at the outbreak of the war in his village, Monhla, some twenty miles from our line of march.

Here for a year after the occupation of Mandalay he lived in comparative peace. But when at the end of 1886 all the country rose, the Burmese people turned on him. Being a European, they confused him with the invaders.

His people could not protect him, and he hid. He told me an exciting story of how he was secreted in a wood and brought food at night by the faithful. But the Burmese had suspicions, and began to search for him with dogs. Then he fled away and sought refuge with the cavalry, who were then passing up ahead of

the column. He was accepted by the captain of the squadron and invited to accompany it. He made a strange addition to the head of the column on the march. Behind the broad-shouldered captain riding on his Arab charger, gay with scarlet cummerbund and blue turban, with a long sword on his saddle, and a lance in hand, rode the priest. He was short and slight and bearded. His cassock was old and brown and stained. It was the only one he had. He had escaped just as he stood. And he rode with ill-assured seat a small, fat, cream-coloured pony that had been lent him. When the column was at the walk it was all right, but when it trotted, still more when it cantered, there was trouble. The roads were narrow and bad, and the big sowars on their big horses clattered noisily behind. The cream-coloured pony jumped and frisked. And at last the worthy father would ride desperately into a bush and so dismount, holding on vigorously to his pony till all was passed. Then following on at his leisure, he would find us safely at our camp. He is still alive and well, but he has left his village now and lives in Mandalay.

After a week's halt we got our orders to move. The cavalry went on in front, and I went with them. Pushing our way through some fifteen miles of forest, we came out into a broad plain. It was the Kawlin plain. Before us were the mountains of the Wuntho Sawbwa, and in a valley to the right was his capital. But that was too far away, and, going on to the village of Kawlin, we camped.

This was the home of the Kawlin Wun. After a year's exile he was back. He wept to see his people once again, to see his village where he lived, the monastery he had built. And his friends came out to meet him, glad to welcome him. The Wuntho Sawbwa's people had retired before us. They were now in the hills above, for the General's column had occupied Wuntho town the day before. There was no fighting. The Sawbwa was said to be negotiating, and all would be peace.

The next day we rode to Wuntho to see the other column. The General and his staff and the Commissioner met us on the way. We received orders to leave a small garrison at Kawlin, and the rest of the column to come in and join the main force at Wuntho. So our march was over for the present.

CHAPTER IX

ON A FRONTIER

THE troops at Wuntho occupied some large monasteries outside the town on the north. The town itself was square, surrounded by a high timber stockade. And in the centre was the palace of the Sawbwa, where civil officers lived. There were five of us there—the Commissioner, who was, of course, the chief, the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the country round Sawbwa would be when it could recognise itself as part of a district and not an unknown country, two minor civil officers, of whom I was one, and a police officer.

The police officer had with him some newly enlisted Burmese police—'Never there's' as they were called, who were of no use at all. But he lent a certain 'at peace' air to the proceedings, ill-balanced by the large military force outside. And of course we had a military guard in the palace. Palace is a large word to use, and in fact it is not a proper translation of the Burmese word. But I can think of no English equivalent. Castle would be suitable if only it had been a castle, but it wasn't. It was a large, untidy

wooden building, built as are most buildings in Burma, with the floor six or eight feet above the ground. It was also surrounded by a stockade dividing it from the town outside. Here we five civilians lived, and had even our mess apart from the soldiers, and did all the high political business that came in our way.

This was rather difficult.

The Sawbwa had not resisted the advance of our columns, he had not defended his capital, he had in fact acted much as King Thibaw did, only that instead of waiting to be arrested he had run away. He was now reported in the mountain overlooking the town, with an army variously estimated at from two hundred to two thousand men. He was perfectly ready to negotiate at a long distance, and the negotiations began. It may be urged that we had no cause to negotiate, our position was clear. We had assumed the government of Burma, and the Sawbwa was its tributary. It therefore lay with him either to come in and accept our suzerainty, or to refuse. In the latter case we had force enough to attack his principality and drive him out.

But in fact the position was not so simple. We had our hands very full without these tributary States. All Upper Burma, and much of Lower Burma, was urgently requiring garrisons. This Sawbwa was only one of many all along the skirts of Upper Burma, and if we went for him, we should have all the others on our hands. Besides, there were political reasons

outside Burma why he should not be hardly dealt with. Our Empire contains a great number of tributary States, and the chiefs of these States are inclined to be apprehensive of our policy towards them. Wuntho was a mountainous, unhealthy, poorly populated country. If the Sawbwa would only behave reasonably, he might retain his country permanently under our overlordship. Therefore the urgent entreaties of the cavalry that they should be let loose to pursue and capture the recalcitrant Sawbwa could not be listened to; we must try persuasion. As the Sawbwa would not listen to our blandishments, further help was sent for. The Kinwun Mingyi, who had been King Thibaw's principal minister and was now on our side, was sent for to come to Wuntho and talk to the Sawbwa.

So the old man came, and he sent messages; but all to little effect. The Sawbwa would not trust us; he would not come to an interview. All he would say was. 'Go away, please, go away. If you will only go, I will give up my recent conquests. I will acknowledge your suzerainty, and I will pay the usual tribute.' An unfortunate mistake made matters worse. As the Sawbwa would not come in, and as it was necessary for some officer to meet him, it was decided that the other junior civil officer, Mr. Cloney, should go and meet him. The Sawbwa was up the mountain. It was arranged that Mr. Cloney should march to the foot of the mountain with a military escort. That he should be met by the Sawbwa's officials there, and

leaving his escort behind, go in their care to meet the Sawbwa, a mile farther on.

So Mr. Cloney went, and he met the Sawbwa, and they sat down to discuss matters. But while they were discussing them, shots were heard from where he had left his escort. Evidently a fight was going on. Presently men came rushing in to say that the soldiers were advancing. They had killed one or two of the Sawbwa's men they met on the road, and were evidently intending to kill or arrest the Sawbwa himself.

Then there was fearful confusion. The Sawbwa was frightened to death, his men were furious. They drew their swords and rushed upon the unfortunate Cloney to destroy him. Killed he would have been, there and then, if it had not been for one of the officials, who threw his arms round Cloney's neck and covered him with his body.

The Sawbwa fled, and Cloney rejoined his escort, who were then halfway up the hill.

It was an unfortunate mistake, never, I think, fully explained.

It naturally confirmed the Sawbwa in his profound distrust of us, and destroyed all hope of his coming in and making friends. 'No,' he said; 'King Thibaw surrendered, and you deported him. I agreed to see one of your officials, and you made an attempt to catch me. If I come in, you will probably shoot me.' Therefore he remained at a considerable distance.

All this lasted some time, but we did not remain

at Wuntho idly all that time. We had a race meeting, in which one of my ponies did well. Burmese ponies were then plentiful and cheap. For fifty rupees you could buy a passable mount, for a hundred a very good pony. But now they are scarce and very dear. We had for several years large numbers of mounted infantry and of transport trains to which these ponies were supplied. And the men in charge of them being inexperienced, the mortality of animals was very heavy. After five years of war a pony was hardly to be got. And now, though there has been peace for fifteen years, the supply of sturdy ponies does not increase, and the price remains very high. One principal reason of this is the unfortunate attempts of ourselves and the Burmese to improve the breed.

The Burmese pony is a small, sturdy, spirited little fellow of from twelve hands to twelve hands three inches. He is suited to the country, will go all day if you don't hustle him, and is as familiar as a pet dog. But being so small, it was considered advisable to try and enlarge the breed. For this purpose the Government imported Arab stallions, and the Burmese villagers took what wretched country-breds they could get—casters from the cavalry, usually. The result was very unsatisfactory. The descendants of the Arabs were large, handsome, and fast. But they were of delicate constitution and not suited to district life. The ponies from the village stallions were leggy, weedy, unwholesome scarecrows. And, worst of all, these half-breeds, good or bad, are a barren stock. The

race dies out. Therefore, instead of improving the breed, we did our best to destroy it altogether—the usual result of benevolence without exact knowledge. I think it is now recognised that the future of the Burmese pony lies in breeding him pure, and not in mixing blood. Mixed breeds, whether of man or animal, always tend to disappear. They inherit the defects of both stocks and the virtues of neither.

After the races, I went out with different columns on exploring expeditions. It must be remembered that all the country was new. No European had ever been here before. There were no maps and no descriptions. Therefore, while avoiding Wuntho territory, we explored the rest of the country. We went down a pass in the mountain to the Irrawaddy, where we established a base for supplies. And we went west across the Mu river into some heavy forest country, where we were heavily attacked one night. We had several other small fights of no serious account.

Looking back on these days from now, there are two or three incidents that come up. They are not incidents of the fights, they are not political events, they are, I suppose, trivial. And yet while I have forgotten most of the events of which our lives then were full, these have remained. One refers to a cup of tea, one to some kerosene oil, and one to a bottle of apricot brandy. I hope it is not significant that they all refer to liquids.

The adventure of the cup of tea was connected with

a fight. We were attacked one night while camping in the forest. There was a tiny monastery there built of bamboo and thatch wherein we officers slept. About two A.M. we were aroused by volleys of musketry. The monastery being conspicuous, the shots went flying through it in all directions. We got out quickly, just as we were. I was particularly lightly dressed, for, being a political officer and a man of peace, I did not consider it necessary to go to sleep half-dressed with my boots on, as the soldiers did.

Outside, it was a February night and bitterly cold. There was nothing for me to do but sit and shiver with the cold. I wanted to go back upstairs and get a blanket, but a sentry at the stairs stopped me. And there I sat four mortal hours till the dawn came and the enemy withdrew. Then we had a cup of tea, cooked over a fire built in a hole in the ground and sheltered with blankets, that the glare of the fire might not be seen.

It was the most glorious drink I ever had. It seemed like pouring hot water into ice. I was all frozen inside and wet, but with the tea the frost dissolved, and the blood went round again.

The kerosene affair was different. We were camped then in a pleasant little place in some fields. There was a village near and supplies were plentiful. The water, however, was thick and muddy, so it was filtered through our little pocket filters and stored in bottles, which were placed in rows inside the door. One day we went out for a long expedition. We were out all

day in the sun, and came back in the evening very hot, very hungry, but most of all, thirsty. Sir Frederick Johnstone, a major in the British mounted infantry, was thirstiest of all. On the way back he had been talking all the time of how thirsty he had become. He began by imagining cool drinks—claret cup with ice on top, and shandy gaff and foaming beer out of a big barrel. But as the time went on and his thirst increased, he dropped them one by one. What were mixed drinks to him, what was flavour, what was scent? He was too deadly thirsty even to notice flavour. It would be only in the way. He longed for plain liquid, and the best liquid of all was water. He wanted it in buckets, barrels, rivers. Then he stopped talking, as his tongue was dry. When we got back he flung himself from his pony and made one leap for the water bottles. He opened his parched mouth and tilted the contents down his throat in a great and gurgling stream.

Fortunately, we had a doctor with us, and he took the astonished and pallid Johnstone and laid him out upon a cot. He made him weird mixtures, lukewarm water and mustard by the gallon, and poured them into him. If Johnstone wanted fluid, he got as much as any man could desire, and he was ill, desperately ill, for a while. But, little by little, as the kerosene oil left his system, he recovered, and by dinner-time he was nearly all right again. He said, however, that he tasted kerosene for weeks, and that he was afraid to smoke for fear he might ignite.

As for the servant who mixed the bottles containing kerosene with the water bottles, I forget what happened to him, whether he was shot or fined or only reprimanded. But I have an idea we never knew exactly who he was.

In this same camp I first saw Sir George White. He was commanding then in Upper Burma and he came round inspecting. No soldier in Burma was more liked and more respected than was he. He looked and spoke and acted like the fine soldier that he was.

And when after dinner his A.D.C. produced a bottle of apricot brandy, just enough to give us a liqueur glass all round, even those who saw him for the first time were sure that he deserved all that was said of him.

For it must be remembered that none of us, except Johnstone, had drank anything but Madras rum for weeks. Now Madras rum is made of arrack, it is flavoured with old worn-out boots, and it smells like sin.

Meanwhile, in Wuntho the negotiations dragged drearily along. The Sawbwa would not come in, and the open season was passing away. At last it was decided that nothing more could be done. If the Sawbwa would not come in, he must stay out. He agreed to relinquish all his recent conquests, to acknowledge British overlordship, and to pay his tribute, which he did mainly in gold ingots. Then the column went away, and I was left at Kawlin to take charge of and administer the newly acquired territory south of Wuntho. A Madras regiment was left to garrison

Kawlin, where a stockade had been built, and small posts with detachments of cavalry were placed on the lines of communication. The rains very soon afterwards set in and the country became an impassable morass.

Kawlin was a dismal place. It was desperately unhealthy—full of a subtle malaria that did not as a rule kill, but only disabled. The men went down with it in dozens. We were all ill, not by periods and times with intervals of health, but continuously and incessantly. The officers of the Madras regiment were invalided one by one; were replaced, and the newcomers were invalided. The English police officers who came to assist me fell sick and went. My clerks formed a procession, sick ones going down and new ones coming up, until at last no one would come, and I had no clerk. Then I did all my own work myself. I cannot say it was heavy, and it obliged me to learn Burmese better and more quickly than if I had an interpreter.

There was, in fact, little to do. As far as I could I tried to get control of the country. I visited the principal villages, and saw their hereditary officials, and tried to draw them into our administration. I sent for the free-lance leaders, who had been roaming the country since the departure of King Thibaw, eighteen months before, to come in and acknowledge our government. I told them to lay down their arms and return to peaceful occupations. I displaced headmen who were recusant, and appointed others I hoped would do better. But it was uphill work. I also kept

up a continuous intercourse with the Wuntho Sawbwa by letters and through his officials, soothing his shattered nerves and encouraging him to go straight. Indeed, he required it. Very little gave him the jumps. I remember, in the middle of the rains, when I was away south, getting a letter from him, 'very urgent' written in red ink, to the effect that he heard cavalry were marching along his border and he was frightened to death. They were only commissariat mules with supplies coming to Kawlin.

Beyond thus trying to consolidate our rule, and making myself acquainted with the country and people, there was little to do. How the people settled their criminal and civil disputes during these years I cannot say, for there were no courts. I don't, however, think they missed that much. Perhaps our courts, now, are what they appreciate least about us. Of all the complicated system of law, revenue, and general administration which now prevails there was then no sign. We wanted only peace, and tried for that alone.

On the whole the country was quiet. A year later it rose in the most determined way, and was for long one of the worst places in Burma. But at first, like the rest of the country, it was fairly quiet. The people were much as I had found them elsewhere—in Shemmago as in Ningyan, three hundred miles away—only less well provided with some of the gifts of civilisation. For instance, they had never seen copper money, and would not take it. If you wanted small change, you

bought a basket of rice and used handfuls of it. They had never seen matches, and had various ways of making fire—flint and steel, compressed air, and friction. But in their social condition I saw no difference. Their laws, habits, customs, were the same as all over Burma. The carvings in their monasteries were unusually good. It is astonishing how uniform the Burmans are. The differences from district to district are hardly noticeable. That is, of course, because the race is homogeneous. Difference such as between Somersetshire and Yorkshire comes from difference in race.

And, getting through the incessant wet, and fever, and monotony as best we could, we arrived at length at the cold weather. But when it came, the only one left was myself. Every one who had come to Kawlin with me in May was gone, and their successors gone too; and in November the whole regiment was certified as too sick for further service, and was sent back to India.

It was an unusual kind of fever. As I have said, it did not kill at once. No European died in Kawlin while I was there, and not many Sepoys, either of the regiment or military police. They merely sickened and became useless. But many died afterwards. I remember hearing in Madras, two years later when I was over there, that out of fifty troopers of the Hyderabad Lancers who garrisoned a place called Singon on the line of communications, not a man or horse survived.

However, at last the rains ended, the stifling heat of September and October was over, and in November 1887 I looked forward with pleasure to a new open season, to see new places, to meet new people, and to do something after the long wait.

CHAPTER X

A HAPPY MONTH

EARLY in November there came news that Government had decided to march the 43rd Ghurkas back to Assam through Kawlin. The Ghurkas were then far east of the Irrawaddy, and Assam lay hundreds of miles to the west, beyond the mountain ranges of Munipur. Without a map, the country will hardly be understood, but it meant a long march, much of it through unknown, uninhabited country, belonging to our new possessions, but where no one had ever been before. The regiment coming up to Kawlin would march for some days through Wuntho territory to the Chindwin, and then through the passes to Munipur. I was to arrange for the march as far as the Chindwin river, and accompany the regiment.

The Sawbwa, on hearing of this order, had a long and severe attack of nerves. It was a plant. The column was intended to depose him and annex his territory. If it crossed his frontier, he would fight, or run, or both. The Sawbwa's official who came to see me said the matter was most serious.

I explained to the officials, but uselessly. 'Yes,'

they said, 'we believe you; we know you. But the Sawbwa has never seen you. He would certainly believe you if he did. But as it is . . .' Evidently the Sawbwa was incredulous.

There were more negotiations. But the more we negotiated, the less progress we made. It was like trying to urge a shying pony. The Sawbwa only backed nearer the precipice.

I felt sorry for him. After all, there seemed to be no harm in him. He had behaved quite properly in all the dealings I had with him. His people liked him, and they spoke well of him. It would be a pity if he went under, and I was sure Government would let him down easily if they could.

Yet there was, of course, a limit to forbearance. After all, he was the Queen's vassal, and his land was British territory, and it could not be borne that British troops should not be able to cross it. The regiment, I was sure, would go, and unless the Sawbwa came to his senses, there would be a row, and that would be the end of him. Yet talking at him across forty miles of mountains was a hopeless business.

There were two roads across to the Chindwin from Kawlin. The northern one ran through the centre of the Wuntho State; it passed the new capital he had founded in the hills, and it came out on the Chindwin river high up. The southern road ran along the Wuntho boundary for some distance, then crossed into Wuntho territory for a distance of twenty miles or so, and came out at Kindat. Government wanted the

regiment to go by the northern road; the Swawba said, if they must go at all, why not go by the southern, which was the better road of the two, and the shorter.

Well, after long negotiations, it was decided to go by the southern road, not so much to spare the Sawbwa's feelings as because we understood the northern road was hardly passable for a regiment. It was very steep; there was no fodder, and, for two marches, no water.

The regiment therefore came up to Kawlin, and we started. But at the third march we came to such difficulties that the Colonel decided the transport could not proceed, and we therefore returned to Kawlin.

The Sawbwa hoped this ended the matter, but no. This road had to be explored, and if the regiment could not go, a detachment might. Fifty men under an officer were to remain at Kawlin to furnish this party. The rest of the regiment then marched to the Irrawaddy, and went down by steamer. Then I was told that Colonel Symons would come up to lead the party.

I suppose no soldier was better known in the Burmese war than Symons. Coming over on the staff with the first column, he was presently appointed to organise the mounted infantry, that were found so necessary; and whenever any difficult affair called for a special officer, it was Symons who was selected. His exploits in Burma would form a short epitome of the six years' war. He began as major, and he

ended by commanding, as brigadier-general, the forces that carried out the Chin-Lushai expedition. His history after then is well known, to his death as Sir William Penn Symons, in the hour of victory, at Dundee. Colonel Symons was coming up, and I was to go with him; we were to explore both roads, and an officer of the Q.M.G.'s department was to come with the party to sketch the roads. When I told the Sawbwa about this, he became as bad as ever. He could never, never stand it. There seemed only one thing to be done. 'Suppose,' I said to the officials, 'I came and visited your Sawbwa, would he come part of the way down to meet me?'

They said he would be charmed with the idea, provided I did not bring any soldiers. The Sawbwa had an antipathy to soldiers, after the previous adventure.

'Will the Sawbwa, in that case, guarantee my safety?'

They said he certainly would.

'Very well,' I said, 'go and see your Sawbwa, and tell him that, provided my Government will allow me, I will come up and visit him, trusting that he will make proper arrangements for my safety.'

Then they went off, and I had recourse to the telegraph wire, for we now had a wire to Kawlin. What the telegraph said in the voluminous messages that passed is immaterial. I got my leave to go, and when the Sawbwa officials returned, we arranged everything. The Sawbwa would come down to a camp in the hills,

two days' march away, to meet me. He fixed the day, and, at the appointed time, I started. My first march was to Wuntho town, where we had been camped the previous spring. At Wuntho I was well received. My own party consisted only of myself, my Madras cook, two Burmese servants, and a Burmese clerk. Two of the Sawbwa officials escorted me with several armed men. They gave a dance in Wuntho for my arrival, and they treated me well.

Next day we went into the hills. It was a stiff march. The mountain paths do not wind about to find easy gradients, they go straight up and down. The streams are bridged by the simple expedient of cutting a big tree so as to fall across, and then trimming off the branches and levelling the trunk. No pony, I should think, but a Burmean pony would face such bridges. They walked over without a qualm. I had a cream-coloured mare who climbed about like a cat while I held on.

It took us four hours to get to the top, and there we found a small bamboo rest-house, where I stopped to breakfast. The kit, of course, came on coolies' heads. In the afternoon I intended to march on the six miles more to the Sawbwa's camp.

But unfortunately I went down with fever. By three o'clock, when we ought to have started, my temperature was up in the hundreds, and I could not move. A messenger went in to tell the Sawbwa that I could not come till next day.

That evening about seven a messenger came back

from the Sawbwa with a letter in which he expressed his regrets. He said that he was unaccustomed to Europeans, and he did not know what they wanted when they had fever. The luxuries at his disposal in such a jungle place were limited, but such as they were he placed them at my disposal, and the messenger produced the following :—One tin of condensed milk, one small tin of sweet mixed biscuits, a tin kitchen spoon, an electro-plate fork, and two enamelled plates. He also sent his own shampooer, who was the most useful gift of all, for he shampooed me to sleep, and next morning I was all right.

It was a pleasant ride. We started early when the air was cold. The path lay down a ravine clothed by thick forest, where the jungle fowl and pheasants ran and called, and as we got near the camp we met officials who came out to meet me. They were gaily dressed in silks, with fur cloaks and gold-hilted swords across their breasts. Before nine I got into the camp.

Imagine a narrow valley where the stream ran between steep hills. The hills were clothed with forest, and there were no signs upon them of inhabitants or cultivation. In one place the stream made a curve, and in the curve there lay a meadow covered with coarse grass. Perhaps this meadow may have been cultivated once with rice, but that was long ago, and the people who had worked it were gone.

In this little glade, occupying nearly the whole of it, was a high and rough stockade of posts and

bamboos. It was not quite new, for it looked weather-beaten, but that appearance soon comes to rough structures in the tropics. There were gates of sawn timber, and on the top of the stockade appeared watch-boxes. Within it stood a large building. This, too, was very rough, mostly of bamboos, and with a thatched roof. Here was the Sawbwa with his men.

Without the stockade, under a big tree, was a new and comfortable little house built for me. But I passed it by and went straight into the stockade to pay my visit.

The enclosure was full of armed men, and in the verandah in front of the building were a number of officials seated on mats upon the floor. There were two chairs for me, and one for the Sawbwa, who, however, had not yet appeared. I sat down and waited.

The Sawbwa was within, and men came out and went in continuously. I supposed the Sawbwa was not dressed. I waited, but still no Sawbwa. Then they brought me cigars and fire, so that I might smoke. I exchanged a few words with the officials near. I watched a juggler practising at the far end of the enclosure. No sign yet of the Sawbwa.

'What is the matter?' I asked.

An official disappeared within apparently to inquire. A woman came and looked at me from behind a curtain. I began to get tired.

'Tell the Sawbwa,' I said to an official near me, 'that I will wait five minutes and no longer. If he

is not ready then, I return at once.' The official disappeared. The minutes passed, and I was just about to go, when an official I knew well, the same who had acted so well in Cloney's affair, came and knelt down beside me. He whispered in my ear, 'The Sawbwa doesn't like you being armed.'

'Do you mean my revolver and sword?' I asked. The official nodded.

I was about to ask if he was afraid, but reflected that this would not improve matters, especially as it was true. 'Breach of etiquette?' I asked.

The official laughed.

'Please tell the Sawbwa,' I said, 'that I brought them with me because I wished to give them to him as presents, otherwise, of course, I would have left them outside.' Then I unbuckled my belt and gave it to the official, who laid it on a mat beside the Sawbwa's chair.

A moment later he came out.

He was much as I had expected, a young man with pleasant face and dignified manners, clearly irresolute and weak. We had a long conversation, and then I returned to my house. Half an hour later he paid me the usual return visit. I found him very difficult to deal with. He was wanting in decision, wanting in determination and insight, wanting in initiative. He was, as I have said before, just like a nervous horse. Not that he was a coward; I believe he was acknowledged by his people to be a good rider, a good hunter, and ready to face dangers

he knew. But as the horse will face a dangerous jump, and shy at a piece of paper or a leaf, so was the Sawbwa. He was full of distrust, he was always imagining things, and he could not thus see his way clearly. He was unable to recognise that there were only two ways before him, frank acceptance of our rule, which meant willing obedience to orders from Government and trust in its word; or rebellion. He kept hovering between the two, turned by every wind that blew. He meant to play honestly himself, but because he could not believe that we did so also, he could not go straight. Instead of making up his own mind and going ahead, he waited on us always in a bitter state of uncertainty as to what we would do.

The result of the interview was that our party was to march through to the Chindwin river by the lower route. After arrival at Kindat we were to march fifty or sixty miles up the river and there meet an escort of the Sawbwa's men, who would bring us back by the northern route through the middle of Wuntho territory. The Sawbwa promised to meet us on the way near his new capital. Besides this arrangement various other matters requiring settlement were discussed and ended.

The Sawbwa presented me with a gold-mounted sword, a pony, and various other things. He also gave presents to all my servants. So we parted in a friendly way.

But I was sure then that the Sawbwa would not be Sawbwa long. He was impossible to deal with. Much as I liked him in ways, and well as I understood the

reason for his attitude, the position was impossible. A door must be open or shut. A vassal must submit to his suzerain and trust him, or he must rebel.

And in fact the Sawbwa, after going on in this way for two more years, suddenly took umbrage at an accident and did rebel. His country was at once overrun, and he fled to China, where I believe he is now. I was far away at the time, but I heard of it without surprise.

I left the Sawbwa's camp next morning, and in one long day's march I returned to Kawlin. Two days later we started, and amid that long period of wars and marches, of change and trouble, that march across to the Chindwin and back returns to me as a delightful interlude. On the way across there were four of us—Colonel Symons, who commanded; Major Sawyer, just over from Simla, who came with us to map the road; Captain Cowley, who commanded the escort, and myself.

We marched every day at dawn, rising before the light to drink our tea by the camp-fire while the things were packed on the mules. It was very cold then and we shivered as we started. But soon the sun rose and the woods became full of life. The jungle cock, most beautiful of birds, called in the woods and ran across in front of us. The peacock-pheasants glided past. The path led up water-courses, the beds full of rocks, or climbed on to the ridge of a watershed and continued there awhile. Sometimes it skirted precipices or was lost in heavy bamboo forest. We had ponies with us, but we rarely rode. Generally we marched, Colonel

Symons at the head with his gun. Sawyer brought up the rear, and drew his map as he went, measuring the distance by his paces. He made a wonderful sketch, and I believe at the end it fitted almost exactly to the scale. Yet there was no ten yards straight anywhere. It curled and curved and rose and fell. About noon usually we came to camp. Then the Ghurkas made us quickly little shelters of bamboo, the mules came up and were unladen, and we had breakfast. In the afternoon I loafed, Colonel Symons read, Sawyer improved his map, and Cowley went out to hunt big game—which he never found.

At night we built huge camp-fires of great logs, and argued or told stories till we went to bed.

At Kindat Sawyer left us. At Sitthaung Cowley left us with his men to go to Munipur, and from there Colonel Symons and I returned alone, accompanied by a few men sent by the Sawbwa.

We climbed more hills, we waded across streams, we shot no end of small game. We met the Sawbwa as arranged and talked to him, and when we reached Kawlin I took a few days' leave and went with Colonel Symons down to Mandalay and stayed with him at the palace. It was a pleasant month between long periods of dulness and discomfort.

Two little stories, and this account of our march is ended. When Symons and Sawyer left Mandalay to come on this expedition, Symons being busy asked Sawyer to arrange the mess. So Sawyer laid in all the stores, the tins of soup, the hams, the biscuits, and

the beer. When he left us at Kindat he made up the accounts.

'Total expenditure,' said Symons, reading the bill, 'stores sixty rupees, fowls, etc., twenty rupees, servants and other expenses, twenty rupees. Total one hundred rupees, of which Symons' share is forty rupees.'

'May I ask why I am not allowed to pay half?'

'Because,' replied Sawyer, 'you didn't use half.'

'I don't remember missing a meal,' said Symons reflectively; 'I have a pretty good appetite too. Why didn't I use half?'

'There are inequalities,' said Sawyer.

'What inequalities?'

'I am six feet four,' said Sawyer, 'and big at that. You are only five feet eight. It is of course inevitable that my messing expenses should be more than yours.' Which is the first time I ever heard of mess bills being calculated by altitude.

But Symons was ready for him. He reflected for a minute, and then he spoke.

'That is true,' he said, 'but you have forgotten our rank. As a Colonel I eat more for my size than you as a Major can by all the articles of war, so the fairest thing will be to divide.' Thus they divided.

The second story is about the Sawbwa. When Colonel Symons and I visited the Sawbwa, we first talked business, and after that the conversation became desultory. Colonel Symons was wearing his sabre, the Sawbwa having got over his fear of weapons. The Sawbwa admired it.

'Yes,' said Symons, 'it is a beautiful weapon. It belonged to my ancestors. The steel is so fine you can pick up a rupee with it without turning the edge.'

The Sawbwa regarded it reflectively. He turned it one side and the other and weighed it in his hands. He ran his finger along the edge. 'Yes,' he said, as he handed it back, 'it is a good sword.' Then turning to one of his officials he said, 'What has become of Maung Ba?'

'Who is Maung Ba?' I asked.

'He is a sword-maker,' said the Sawbwa, 'who made swords that would cut a pile of twenty rupees in two at one stroke.'

'I should like to see him,' said Colonel Symons.

'I will inquire and send him to you,' answered the Sawbwa politely.

CHAPTER XI

ANOTHER FRONTIER

In July 1888 I left Kawlin and went to the Chin frontier.

All along the western frontier of Burma dividing it from Assam and the Bay of Bengal lies an enormous range of mountains. It is indeed more like a series of parallel ranges than one range. It is a buttress of the Thibet citadel, and it ends in the sea at Cape Negrais.

This great range of mountains is inhabited by savage tribes called on the Burma side Chins, and on the other side Lushais. They are a small black sturdy race of people, each tribe speaking its own dialect, with no written language, and a very elementary civilisation. These tribes had at first kept quiet, but now, sharing in the general upheaval, they had begun to raid. One tribe had carried off the Burmese Sawbwa of the valley along the mountain base, whom they, however, subsequently released. And other tribes had come down into the valley and attacked the villages, killing the men and carrying off the women and children as captives.

In the preceding cold weather we had established

posts along the base of the hills, and Captain Travers had remained as Political Officer. He was now dead, and I was to take his place. Towards the end of August I arrived at the post on the Chindwin river that gave entrance to the Kalè valley. The streams, one running north, the other south along the base of the mountains, met, and joining forces burst a way east through a low range of hills and fell into the Chindwin here. The river was called the Myittha, and it was now in heavy flood. Up this lay my way to Indin, my headquarters.

The boats I and my party went in were dug-outs. They were perhaps twenty-five feet long by three feet broad. Near the stern was a little covered cabin some four feet high and eight long, where I sat. The boatmen poled or rowed or tracked from the bank with a rope. The river was in high flood, thirty feet higher than its cold-weather level ; the banks were very steep and rocky, and our progress was slow. The first day we made four miles by dint of very severe exertion, all the crews of the four boats having to join to get each boat past bad places. The rain poured down incessantly, and when we halted there was no place to land. The banks were precipitous, with difficulty giving any foothold, and reeking with wet.

For the four days that voyage lasted I never landed except once or twice to help the men at a very hard place ; we never lit a fire, had no warm food, and slept at night in the tiny cabins, while the rain never ceased.

The second day we passed the rapids and made two miles. But after that, when we entered the Kalè valley, the scenery changed. Coming out of the defile we emerged into an enormous swamp. On the west rose like a huge wall the Chin hills, on the east was the low range through which we had come, and all between was flooded by the river. The banks were feet under water everywhere, but the huge grasses rose above the flood, marking where the river banks should be.

Through this green swamp we poled. The water was not very deep, three feet or four or six, but it was everywhere. There was no dry spot on which to land, no cooking could yet be done; the rain still swished and soaked, until at last on the evening of the fourth day it stopped. The clouds cleared, and a great full moon came out and hung above the valley. The muddy waters turned to silver lakes, the hills drew purple wreaths about their feet, the night became full of magic; and so at midnight we came to our journey's end. It was a little village on the right bank of the river. There was a post here of some hundred sepoys of military police, and here the Sawbwa lived.

He was a little man compared to him of Wuntho, ruling but this valley. He was very poor, and his valley was suffering so much from Chin invasions that his people were deserting it. It must be remembered that my position *vis à vis* him was very different from what it had been to the Wuntho Sawbwa. The latter

regarded the British Government with distrust, as his enemy to be guarded against and feared. To the Kalè Sawbwa we came as friends and helpers. But for us his valley would be destroyed, and his people killed. We were his allies and protectors. Over against us, in those huge mountains, lived the tribes who came down suddenly by night, swooped on a village, and departed, leaving behind them only ashes and corpses. Their movements were so quick, so unexpected, that there was no chance of catching them or cutting them off. The mountains they lived in were unknown and almost inaccessible. The communications in the valley so bad that, although we had four different posts of military police ranged along it, they could only protect the village in which they were. A village even a few miles away might be rushed and destroyed, and the raiding party half way to their hills before we even heard of it. There was only one way to have peace, and that was to send columns into the hills. The Chins must be reduced to subjection. Only in that way could there be quiet.

My duty was to prepare the way, as far as possible, for the columns which would come up that cold weather, to sketch maps of the hills from the explanations of those who had been there, to make out routes, to collect all the information possible. From the few tame Chins who lived in the valley, from Burmans who had visited the hills, from escaped captives, I got all the facts I could. Besides that I could do nothing. Just at the time I came to the

valley the raids had ceased. The heavy rains had flooded the mountain streams and blocked the paths, so for two months there was peace.

If life in Kawlin had disadvantages, that in Kalè was worse. In Kawlin there were other Englishmen, even after the departure of the troops; in Kalè I was alone.

In Kawlin the roads were bad; in Kalè there were none. In Kawlin, fowls and vegetables were obtainable, and we baked bread. In Kalè there was absolutely nothing to be had but rice. Tinned meat, biscuits, and rice was the daily *menu*. Kawlin was unhealthy; Kalè was the valley of death. Kawlin had a telegraph and a postal delivery; Kalè was a hundred miles from either. I sat in an old monastery in the midst of the everlasting wet, or went occasional journeys up and down the river to visit the other posts. It was November when at last the rains ceased, the river fell, and the country began to dry up.

I then moved into a tiny house I had built within the military police stockade, just outside Indin, for the river was passable, and the Chins might come at any time. Already they had been seen roaming in the woods, and had killed some cultivators. We were sure trouble would come, and it did not delay.

One morning early, while it was yet dark, I awoke. Just outside my hut was the fort gate, and in a little watch-box outside it a sentry stood day and night. I liked to have him there at night, and to hear the

periodic cry going round the hut in dying cadence, 'Number one—All's well,' answered by all the others.

When I awoke all was silence. Then I heard the sentry call out softly, 'Havildar, Havildar sahib.' The Havildar of the guard came up, and they began to talk. I could not hear what they said, but it made me uneasy. I got up and went out.

'Hush,' said the Havildar, raising his hand. We stood and listened.

It was still dark. Along the valley lay a light mist through which the stars shone dimly. Afar, on the edges of the eastern hills, a faint white line heralded the dawn. A dead stillness hung over the valley, not a sound came to us.

The Havildar shook his head. 'It is quite certain,' declared the sentry. 'I heard the shots clearly down the river, to the north.' He listened again and no sound came. Then we opened the gate and went down to the river, shrunken now within broad banks of sand. We knelt upon the sand and listened, our ears to the water. At first all that came were the river sounds, the ripple of the wavelets on the sands, the fall of earth into the stream where the bank was undermined. Then very faint, but clear, travelling along the water, came a sound, a shot, and then another. A pause, and then a louder, sharper noise. We rose suddenly to our feet. There was no mistaking that. It was a volley.

'The troops at Kambalè,' said the Havildar. 'The

Chins . . . do not fire volleys. It is they. There is fighting there.'

I ordered two boats to be got ready, and ere the dawn was fully come we were rowing down the river.

Kambalè was a fort ten miles or so lower down. It was not on the river bank, but two miles inland. I got there before noon and heard the news. The Chins had attacked the old village of Kalè, once a city, and had killed many men and carried off many captives. The military police, who were two miles away, arrived only in time to fire a few volleys at the retiring savages. They fled with extraordinary swiftness into the fastnesses of the hills and disappeared.

So began the open season, and after that there was no peace. They raided here and raided there. No one knew where the blow would fall. They were in great numbers, and the villagers, reduced in numbers, terrified and disheartened, could do nothing. It seemed as if by the time the columns arrived the valley would be depopulated. The authorities sent up all the men they could from below, military police and English police officers, and we made what dispositions we could to protect the villagers.

Above all, we wanted to preserve Kalè. It was the largest village in the valley. It used to be a city, and the ruined walls still showed its great size. It fell in a rebellion fifty years before and had never been rebuilt. Since then it had shrunk and shrunk till now it was a poor hamlet huddled in a corner of the old city site. Yet still it held its name. It was the

mother town of all the valley. To its destruction the Chins intended to devote all their strength. The attack I have just described was but a reconnaissance. They would soon return and destroy it utterly. And they sent down messages to that effect. We determined to preserve it, and so four of us with a hundred men went and established ourselves there.

It was a horrible place, smothered in mud and filth. The houses were half tumbled down, the stockade was rotten and unsafe. And night after night the Chins came down, four or five hundred of them, seeking for a chance to make a rush.

But we knew their ways. They have but one method of attack and one time. They always attack during the waxing moon. It gives them light to come out from the hills to the village they intend to attack. They wait till the moon sets. Then in the dark before the sunrise they fall suddenly upon the place and carry it by storm. The early dawn sees them going back, and soon after the sun is risen they are again within their hills.

And therefore every morning during the waxing moon we rose at two, and falling-in the men, we made our disposition. At the first shot or first alarm we should have sallied out of all the gates and met the Chins upon the little open space beyond the walls. We longed that they would come on. They never did. They came down several times, they surrounded the village stealthily in the dark, ready to rush. But at the last some sound from within, an order perhaps,

a rattle of arms, told them they were expected, so they retired.

Twice indeed we recognised their presence, and as soon as we could see we pursued them towards the hills. But they went quicker than we could, and they got away. Their aim then was not to fight but to raid and rob. Later on, when we invaded their hills, they fought with great courage and devotion. A tribe of Chins called the Seyins, and a small tribe of Kachins near Bhamo, gave us harder fighting than all the rest of Burma put together. They were more savage, better armed, and their hills gave them such enormous advantages.

So, amid incessant alarm and incursions and occasional skirmishes, the cold weather came, and with it the column. After a short halt at the base to collect supplies it advanced into the hills. With the two years' expeditions in the hills I had nothing to do. The columns went up, but I did not not go with them. Another senior officer was then Political.

I remained in charge of the valley down below to manage its affairs, to help the officers at the base, to forward supplies. And the news came down to us day after day of fights upon the hills. The camps were attacked at night ; convoys were fired on and cut off ; the hills were in a turmoil of unrest. But down below we had comparative peace. The tables now were turned. It was not the Burmese villages now that burned, but those of their enemies. Yet the Chins

showed no sign of giving in. They fought with the most determined courage; and only now and then a party of them would still come down, would carry off a woman from the fields, would fire upon a boat. Once even they went down to the rapids and fired upon our convoys as they tracked slowly up.

Then came the rains again, the incessant wet, the floods, the want of any food but that from tins, the fever and the cholera. In our base forth beyond Kalè out of two hundred men on one occasion but *one man* was reputed fit for duty. The others were all ill. The sentries, the escorts, the convoys were all formed of men who should, by rights, have been in hospital. And the roads, the roads along which our convoys passed! A native doctor going down from the fort to see the cholera people in Kalè town reported once to me with indignation, 'The road is impassable. Even an elephant can hardly go. The mud this morning came up to his waist.' I don't know where an elephant's waist is, but the mud I knew was deep.

Then came the cold weather again, and more troops, more columns, and a new general. It was Symons, now become a Brigadier, whom they sent to carry out these new operations.

These were long, but in the end we were successful, as we always are.

I was not there to see. In December 1889 I left the Chin frontier, never to return. In the dry weather, when the troops were there, when there was continual

movement and change, and always many officers, life was pleasant enough. But in the rains, when the garrisons were reduced to their utmost, when fever became a daily routine, and there was nothing to do, it was different.

The days hung very heavily. It rained and rained, and we sat in the fort and watched the rain fall. The country became a morass, and to go either up or down the line of communications, or visit any village, meant to wade and struggle. There was no change. In a few days we had said to each other all we had to say. We could only study Burmese and read, when we had anything to read. Any new arrival was welcome for three reasons—for himself, for his news, for his books; and every book was passed from hand to hand till all had read it.

For myself, I had no books. In December 1888 an accidental fire in an outpost had destroyed all I possessed in the world—clothes and shoes and trophies, such as the Sawbwa's sword, and all my books. I was dressed by the regimental tailor in clothes made out of cloth woven in the village hand-looms, and for weeks I had neither hat nor boots.

But I think the dearth of reading matter troubled me most. Some men got files of old English daily papers and read them through, beginning at the police news, and ending with all the advertisements. And by so doing they lost their early faith. For to read the articles in a daily paper one month later is to discover many things. As they come out day by day,

the imposing style, the certain assertion, the general omniscience of all the past and all the future are impressive. But a month later, when the more recent telegrams have falsified the prophecies and have contradicted the assertions, is another thing. The style hangs round the matter like a cloak that flaps and discloses the nothingness within.

Yet one bright spot there was. Some one, I know not who, brought up one day the early books of Rudyard Kipling—the little grey bookstall pamphlets wherewith he made his name. They went round all the forts like wildfire. They were bespoken weeks ahead. If a man had started a circulating library with them alone, he would have made a fortune. They came nearer to us, to our lives, to our feelings, than any other books. We admired them, rejoiced in them, and at the same time rather disliked them too.

But of all remembrances of that valley, the most wonderful, the most lasting, is that I have of the sunrise as it came each day when the rains were not. Rising behind the low eastern hills, the valley lay in shadow while the rays struck right across and lit the eastern peaks. Slowly the light came down, and as it fell it drew from out the hillsides faint dewy mists that turned to crimson. Lower and lower it came, until the sun leapt suddenly above the ridge, and the whole western mountains swam in that blood-red haze — formless, immense, and terrible. Then, as the sun grew hotter, it faded, until at last the whole world was clear and bright.

Two Little Stories of Two Generals

After the early fighting in the hills, and when the column was establishing itself in a fort up there, some Chin chiefs came in to negotiate. Or rather they came in to ask questions and make remarks. They wanted to know, firstly, what we meant by crossing into their hills at all; secondly, when we intended to go away. And they wished to add that if we didn't go soon they intended to make things hot for us. For the simple Chin knew his own mind, and was more or less indifferent about ours. The Political Officer explained how very much his thoughts varied from theirs, but they were deaf to what he said. Then the General took the chiefs in hand. 'Words,' he said, 'are useless; soldiers have other means. I will give them a demonstration—then they will be afraid.'

So he called out some troops, and formed them up in line, and fired volleys across an open space, knocking the targets into bits. He told the Chins to imagine themselves the targets, and the Chins smiled. Then the guns were brought out. There was a Chin village across the valley that had been taken by assault a few days before, and was now abandoned. The guns were turned on this village and fired some shells. The shells hit the village fair and square, but to every one's surprise it immediately showed signs of life. Little black figures began to run about and escape. And the General laughed, the staff laughed, even the Chins laughed. Here was indeed a demonstration. But

when the colonel of a Ghurka regiment came in hot haste to inquire why his working party there was being fired on, the laughter died from all faces, collecting only on the faces of the Chin chiefs, who sat upon the ground and shrieked. So the demonstration was stopped. But it was not lost. For the rest of the war the Chins took very good care, if they wished to have a fight, to arrange it in thick woods where volleys were impossible, and when they built stockades they did it where the guns could not shell them. A good lesson is never lost. If it does not benefit one party, it may do the other.

The second story is about General Symons. One night after dinner we were all sitting talking in the village of Kalè—for the headquarters were again there and not in the fort. We were expecting an attack, and sentries and pickets were posted far out beyond the stockade. Suddenly we heard one shot; of course every one jumped up. The bugles went; the men fell in; the officers ran to their posts. General Symons alone had not moved. After listening intently for a minute or two, he had sat down again. I myself was between two minds—whether to go out with one of the parties hastily assembling outside, or to stay with the General, who was lighting another cigar. So I stood irresolutely by the door.

'You can sit down,' said Symons; 'it is nothing. A sentry has let off his rifle by accident. That is all.'

And so it proved. Leaning upon his rifle, it had gone off, and so had his fingers.

General Symons told me afterwards how he knew. But war was to him a pleasure and an instinct. He understood it naturally; and, when he fell at Dundee, England lost a greater soldier than perhaps she knew.

CHAPTER XII

PEACE AT LAST

IN the beginning of 1890, after more than three years' absence, I returned to the central districts of Upper Burma.

In these three years a great change had taken place. A few insurgent leaders still remained in difficult parts of the country, but they were now without influence and without following. They had become fugitives, sheltered by the people, but incapable of further harm. There were still occasional 'dacoities,' but these had deteriorated into crimes, and were no longer illuminated by patriotism nor condoned by the country-side who suffered from them. Burma was pacified, and, for the first time since I crossed the frontier in 1886, I was able to lay aside my revolver and to live beyond the sound of a sentry.

At first the change was difficult to realise. That we should be able to ride about alone and without arms, that one could go into camp and stay in zayats or little rest-houses without any guard; that our duties were no longer to consist in getting information of enemies, but in organising the revenue and practical

administration, required a readjustment of all one's ideas. It seemed in 1886 and 1887 that Burma would never be quiet, but now it was so. There was a railway open to Mandalay, and trunk roads had been cut to all important towns.

It will be interesting to note how all this had been accomplished—to recall the lessons learnt here. For they are very soon forgotten, and they are in many ways of general application. If they had been remembered in the Transvaal, the necessity of learning them all over again there would have been obviated.

The greatest want was cavalry and mounted infantry. The first columns that came to Upper Burma had no cavalry at all. They had a few of the Volunteer Mounted Infantry from Rangoon, but all I ever heard of their doing was humping bags of rations on Mandalay shore, which is hardly the rôle for which mounted men were intended. And it was not till a year later that any mounted men came at all. Then four regiments of cavalry were sent, and mounted infantry companies were formed out of every regiment in Burma. They were mounted on Burma ponies, and their value was great.

For the great essential for a few troops in a great country is rapidity of movement and mobility. When you get information of a hostile gathering, you must be able to strike at once, and before they know you are coming. Infantry can never do this. Especially in a tropical country like this their movements are slow. They march not more than three miles an

hour over the bad roads. And as every camp and post was watched, directly any column moved the news went ahead of it and the enemy were warned. Now mounted men went faster than the news, and fell upon the insurgents before they could get away. With infantry alone the insurgents felt themselves safe. Going light and knowing all the roads, they always knew exactly what a column was doing, and would get out of its way or attack it where they chose; and after a fight they escaped with ease. Mounted men altered all this. It is true that Upper Burma is not a cavalry country, it is too rough and too enclosed. But mounted infantry can work well enough.

The next lesson to learn was that columns moving through a country did not pacify it. The people let the column go, and closed up behind it the same as before. Moving columns may be good against an organised force, and may destroy that organism. Against a people in arms they have no permanent effect. You must not only come, but stay.

So the country was, as it were, pegged down by innumerable small armed posts, distributed at from ten to fifteen miles apart. Some were of troops, some of military police recruited from Upper India and trained as troops, of which some twenty thousand were raised. Each post consisted of fifty to a hundred men, and was usually commanded by a subaltern. The subaltern sat down in the post with his men and got a grip of the country all round. He visited all the villages, got to know the people and the roads,

and was then independent of guides. No big gathering could take place without being nipped in the bud. And in time the people got accustomed to his presence and reconciled to the inevitable. These were the two main military measures. The third measure was administration.

Upper Burma, as I have said, consisted of village communities, all to a great extent self-contained. These villages had been the growth of centuries. The people were all more or less related to each other, and were accustomed to mutual responsibility. Under the Burmese kings the taxation was levied on the villages as a whole, and the demand was subdivided by the elders amongst the houses. They judged all their petty cases, and they were, as a community, responsible for the acts of their members. Thus, if stolen cattle were traced to the village, the community was responsible to the owner, and so in other matters. And their organism, unlike that of the central government, had a strong and vigorous life of its own.

This principle was used to restore peace. The village was held responsible for keeping the peace within its borders, and for the good behaviour of its members. Thus, if a village harboured insurgents, or sent its young men to join a band, it could be punished. It could be fined, or have troops or police quartered in it.

There was, further, the power to deport from one place to another any persons who were suspected of assisting the insurgents.

Such measures had slow though permanent success.

All the insurgent leaders were purely local men. Beyond a narrow circle they were unknown and had no power. If their relations who fed and helped them were required to go and live elsewhere, and if the villages from which they drew their supplies were fined continuously till they were arrested, they soon were left helpless. If they went away to other parts of the country, they were unknown, and, even if not noticed and arrested, they could do nothing.

But one form of punishment was strictly prohibited. No village, or part of a village, was ever to be burnt. In wars of invasion where the conqueror intends to retire, this might be done occasionally, no doubt, with success. Where the intention is to remain, the burning of a village is a mistake. It punishes the people certainly, but it does more. It makes them hopeless, it exasperates them. Many of them have now lost their all, and have nothing to live for but revenge.

In wars of conquest, if your conquest is to be a success, if the people are to settle down with you afterwards, you must above all things be careful never to exasperate them, never to lose your temper, never to be vindictive or cruel. Such memories live and bear evil fruit. To shoot men who resist you, to punish localities which harbour insurgents, to deport or imprison those whom it is necessary to remove, these wounds leave no scars. They are quickly forgotten.

To burn villages or to have public parades of

execution leaves sores that time will never efface, either in the East or West. Such deeds do not frighten, they exasperate. That Upper Burma at last has settled down so peacefully is in part because such things were hardly ever done. There was a very strict order against burning, and public executions were hardly ever carried out. I remember one such case only, where it was considered that the execution of certain leaders in their own village before their people would have a good effect. It was not a pure coincidence that from this village came the fanatics who in 1896 tried to rush the palace at Mandalay and kill the officers in the Club. Men who tame horses and animals tell you that you must sometimes punish, you must sometimes even be severe. But you must never lose your temper. If you do that, the horse never forgets or forgives. Men are like this too.

The first people who came to our side were the merchant and trading classes. War meant more to them than to the peasants. The peasant tilled his field and lived—poorly perhaps, but still he got food. His wife and daughter wove his clothes. He had the strong patriotism of him who holds the land, who is part of it, who clings to it with a passionate desire which has no equal.

The trader in war time suffers more. For trade is almost dead. If he has money, it is taken for war purposes; if he sends merchandise abroad to the villages, it is robbed. Only in peace can he thrive and do his work. And then again the merchant, divorced from

his land, has never the strong patriotism of those who live on it and by it. The desire of money has to some extent displaced the simple patriotism of the peasant and the landowner. He does not feel the stranger's presence a desecration. He trades with him and makes money. He desires peace that he may succeed. He is quicker to see when resistance becomes hopeless. So our first friends were the traders, and their influence spread from trading centres. Then the influence of the monks made for peace.

Not that the monks liked us. They disliked us as much as any one could. Many of them saw, no doubt, that our influence must in the end overshadow theirs; that we brought with us a breath of unrest that would shake their faith and custom.

Yet with very few exceptions they remained true to their doctrines. They preached peace. 'Doka aneitsa anatta.' 'There is only one good thing in the world, and that is peace.'

Of course, here and there is found an exception; here and there a man not a monk at all assumed monk's robes as a disguise to hide him from us. And from such instances men have judged the monks wrongly. It is so easy to make mistakes from a distance. If you never hear of a monk but when he is concerned in a disturbance, you are apt to think the insurgent monk a rule, because the thousand monks who stand apart you never hear of. Men judge by what they see, not of what does not obtrude itself on them.

And so in 1890 Burma was quiet. It was like a high-tempered colt brought from out the pastures bitted and bridled. It was exhausted, panting, weary of the useless effort. But the people had begun to see, I think, that we were not so bad as they had feared. If we could be bad enemies, we could be good friends too, and we were ready to make friends. They sulked for a while, desired to see as little of us as possible, to have as little intercourse with us as might be. Naturally they were sore; but there was no enduring bitterness; and if most of our troops had not been Indian troops there would have been even less soreness.

'To be beaten by the English we don't so much mind,' they said, 'for after all you are a great people. But that you should bring Indian troops to do it is what we do not like.' For the Burman hates and despises all the Indian races which he knows.

Therefore after 1890 all that remained was to organise our administration and proceed. Year by year the country has grown more peaceful, more resigned to make the best of it. Year by year organisation grew. And now, after fifteen years, Upper Burma is just a quiet ordinary province of the Empire, differing enormously from all the rest of it in the people and the circumstances, but with a government formed on just the same lines. The government of Burma is an extension of the government of India. What we have found we can do well in India we have extended here. For it must always be remembered that if we are to govern we must have a method that

suits us, that we understand and that we can use. Another class is added to our school, but the school is unchanged. We have our limitations too, and we cannot alter to suit different peoples.

In such manner as I have tried to describe did Burma come under our rule.

What after fifteen years that rule has done for it I will try to show in the next part.

PART II

CHAPTER XIII

OUR RULE IN INDIA

To observe correctly the effects of our rule in the East it is necessary first to have a clear conception of what that rule is. And to obtain this it is necessary to go some way back; to note how it arose and developed, and what were the forces that lay beneath the surface.

The Honourable East India Company was, as every one knows, a company of traders to the East. Its object was trade, and trade alone. It wanted to make money, and money alone. There was in it no idea whatever of Empire or of rule. But Fate was behind them, and as Fate pushed them so they went.

To establish their factories they obtained concessions of land. To make these concessions secure they built forts and raised an armed force. To these factories where wealth accumulated came native princes and sought loans, and the Company granted these loans and took in payment monopolies in their territories. To protect these monopolies they were obliged to interfere in the politics of the country. To render such interference possible and also to protect them-

selves from the French, more soldiers, European and native, were necessary. Then the native rulers being weak, political influence was turned into political power. The native rulers became unable to hold their own. For instance, in Bengal the Company's monopoly of saltpetre and their system of duty-free passes were worked in such a manner that the local authorities were powerless. The people were ruined, and when the native official interfered on their behalf, the Company, very strong but very keen after money, was indignant. The agents of the Company, acting upon the weakness of the native rulers, simply created anarchy. And where anarchy arises trade ceases. The Company then were faced with the necessity of taking over the government if they were to trade at all. They had destroyed what order there was, and made it impossible for any one to create a peace. Their greed soon ruined every native prince who was set up. If they were to trade, if indeed they were to continue to exist at all, they must themselves assume the sovereign power.

But for this the Company was entirely unsuited. It was formed of traders, it was formed to trade. It was formed of merchants of the middle classes of England, and they had in them the spirit of Anglo-Saxon England. They wanted money, and Empire was unknown to them. For the England of that day remained in fact, though not perhaps in name, the England of the centuries after the Norman conquest. There were two strata. There was the King and the

governing class, the Lords and the country gentlemen who filled the Commons, and which was Norman. No matter that they no longer called themselves so. They were Norman, Norman in descent, Norman in authority, in power, in ideals, and in deeds. They were still the Imperial race who made England, who conquered its many warring little Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and welded them into one whole. They were of the race who had but one aptitude, but that was of command. They felt that they were born leaders, and they meant to lead. For the rest, they were indifferent. They cared little for money, for art, for knowledge, for anything but power. And they had that supreme faculty—the ability to rule other nations, to understand them, to identify their interests with these peoples. They even abandoned their name of Norman and became English, leaders of the people of England. But they remained—some still remain—a caste apart. They would not mix their blood, knowing that mixed blood is valueless, and the sons born of it die out. Their ideals were Empire, the concentration of power.

Beneath them were the Anglo-Saxons, and their ideals were as different, are still as different, from those of an imperial race as can be imagined.

Of the concentration of power, of the welding of peoples and provinces they had no idea. Empires and kingdoms were beyond their ken, beyond their power of sight and understanding. While the Norman saw big and could not see small, they saw small and could not see big. Their ideal of government was the

municipality, the small local area which elected its own council and managed its own affairs. They thought that the only possible form of rule, and that all people should have it. They considered that every respectable man was equal to any other, had an equal right to share in the government, and an equal claim upon all the benefits of it. They had in them neither the sympathy to understand other peoples nor the desire to govern them.

They thought that other races should also govern themselves by elected members. If they were unable to do that, then they ought to be enslaved or destroyed. Their world had room only for two classes of men—those strong enough to rule themselves, and those who must be slaves to the Anglo-Saxon. All others must go. Of the paternal guardianship of weaker races against the exploitation of the strong they had not the very least notion.

Nothing is clearer in our history than this. When the Anglo-Saxon has had his way he has always destroyed or enslaved. In Australia he destroyed the natives, he enslaved the Kanakas; in Africa he tried to do the same; in the United States he destroyed the Indians. He enslaved the negro, and when the reaction came in 1858, he went to the opposite extreme and made the negro theoretically an equal, gave him votes and set him free.

Where weaker races have survived in our Empire, it has always been due to the Imperial Government. If the Maories in New Zealand, the Indians in Canada

still survive, it is directly due to the English government, to the Norman spirit that has almost always sustained that government. In South Africa it is notorious that it has been our government in England who, having first saved the settlers from the natives, then saved the natives from the settlers again and again. The Anglo-Saxon would destroy other races which compete with him in a climate he can live in, and enslave them in a climate too hot for him to work in. If there was no slavery in England, that was not the credit of the Anglo-Saxon but of his Norman government.

And in India it was no otherwise. The Company had a flourishing slave trade at Madras in very early days, a trade that so stank in native nostrils that Aurungzebe started to destroy the Madras factory. Only a hasty abolition of the trade appeased him. But when the danger was withdrawn, the trade was renewed. When the Company found the necessity of some local government in their factories, they initiated the quaintest caricature of a municipality. That was all they understood. They had not the least understanding, the least sympathy. They had no flexibility. 'Equal and brother,' or 'slave,'—between these terms they had no meaning. They were as far as possible from a race with imperial ideas.

The initiators of European empire in India were the great Frenchmen, Dupleix and Labourdonnais, not the Company's servants. Neither was it from their own strength that the Company did not fall

before the native princes, before French and Portuguese and Dutch hostility. They had in themselves very little fighting strength. They had no service of men, and hardly any officers. They had practically no navy. If they did not fall, it was because their government held them up. It gave them ships of war, it gave them king's troops and officers, it assisted them to raise money. The English Government, always imperial, fulfilled its duty, while the French Government left its men to ruin. There is perhaps nothing sadder than the history of the fate of the two great Frenchmen. But it must be remembered that the French Government were no way to blame. The fate of France lay other whither than in the East. Their task lay in the Continent about them. That called for all their strength. They had no force to spare for further ventures. It was for France to concentrate for the great world-cleansing struggles coming on. The East called to her, but she would not hear.

Pitt, the greatest minister we have ever known, recognised the facts and knew his strength. He heard. His government answered, and after Plassey, the Company, behind which was the State, stood as the one strong power in India. Clive and Hastings were great men, but it was not they who made the Indian Empire. It was Pitt and the British Government who did that.

Those who believe the Company had the power and knowledge to rule should read what happened

under their control. The native rule was bad, but it was weak. That saved it. The Company was worse, and it was strong. It could not be easily shaken, could not be obstructed. It existed for money, and it got money. For the rest it was indifferent, or, if perhaps not indifferent, yet unable to act otherwise. It squeezed and squeezed with an iron hand. Read Colonel Dow's 'Enquiry into the State of Bengal in 1770.' He declares that the only misdeed the Company's servants did not commit was interference with religion. 'He who will consent to part with his property may carry his opinions away with freedom.'

The country was reduced to abject misery, the people to a slavery the East had never known. Against native misrule there was always the relief of rebellion or assassination, there was always the temporary influences of a fellowship of race and faith. But these English traders were too strong and fierce, too brave and disciplined, to permit of any resistance save the final one of universal rising and massacre, and this very nearly happened. Of temperate influence there was none.

The Company's servants were corrupt. They received presents. They bought and sold favour. They were still nine-tenths merchants and only a tenth officials. They were poorly paid, and it was understood that they should recoup themselves with private trade. And between the private trade of an official and corruption there is no line. Besides, corruption

was in the air. In England bribes were freely given everywhere, and Englishmen coming to India did not bring out with them any feeling against it. And in the East there was no public opinion to which Englishmen were subject. Every one of them took bribes; who was to censure?

Yet an opinion there was, though far away, and at last it awoke. A storm arose in England that could not be braved. Writers have called that storm ingratitude. Because Warren Hastings had to stand his trial, because Clive was bitterly attacked and censured, because England turned on them its wrath and indignation at what the Company had done in India, therefore is England blamed. They added empires to the Empire, new laurels to her wreaths, and they were reviled. Perhaps they were the wrong men. Perhaps others were more to blame.

When Warren Hastings was tried, it was not he but the Company that stood at the bar; when he was tardily acquitted, it was not the Company but the man who stood absolved from blame.

But in truth the blame lay neither in them nor in any one. Whatever happened was inevitable. When men try to rule who have neither the understanding nor the aptitude, when traders combine trade with empire, when a company is backed by the power of a government and not controlled by it, what else can happen? The Company were utterly unfit for rule. They tried, often with the best intentions, and failed. The government in England took the matter in

hand. Having furnished much of the strength, it now began to control. When Warren Hastings returned to power the second time, he came as the King's man, not the Company's. But even so, the control was not enough. It was but in name.

In 1783 the Board of Control was established; and from that date the Crown steadily increased its power. And as its power increased so did the government of India improve.

It would be an interesting study to trace the gradual substitution of the one power for the other, to note how the principles proper to governments displaced those proper to trade.

The Company carried on government on business principles. They did it to pay. It was a trade just like any other trade where the object is to enrich the trader, and the weak go to the wall. But government is not a business and its principles are very different. Its object is not to enrich its officers, but only to pay them a fair salary. It competes with no one, it tries to best no one, to undersell no one; its gains and losses are not to be measured by any money standard. But neither does it believe in the Anglo-Saxon maxims that 'all men were born free and equal,' and that there should be 'no taxation without representation.'

No government in India could exist on such maxims, and our rule is founded on very different ideas. They are, that the first necessity for all men is a strong and stable government, and that all rights and ideals come second to this necessity. If people

can themselves provide this government, well and good. No one would want to interfere, no one could possibly interfere with success, even if they did so wish. But if not, then the right of government falls to any one who provides this strong and just government. We alone have shown our ability to do so. We govern India because we can do so, because we alone can do so, because our success justifies us. If at any time our ability to govern fairly and justly should leave us, then no doubt our rule will end too. The first right of man is to a strong and just government. If we are no longer able to provide this, our right to rule will lapse.

And meanwhile the ideals that government works on are something like this: to be sympathetic to all, to be just to all, to make the law as far as possible the same to all, but recognising differences that exist. A law that is fair to one community may be hopelessly unfair to another. Savage tribes cannot be treated in the same way as city dwellers. Freedom is a great thing, equal laws are good, but too much freedom, too much equality, may end in one community preying on another and destroying it. A theoretical liberty may end in a practical slavery. And government tolerates no slaveries, it allows no monopolies, whether created or acquired. Equal justice is not attained by equal laws, for the same law in different circumstances produces different results. Laws must be adapted to facts and peoples. The weaker must be protected, the stronger restrained.

The Empire is no cockpit where the weaker may be destroyed by the sharper or the more cunning, while we keep the peace. Every race and class and religion may appeal to government for safety for itself, none to the damage of its neighbour. And it is essentially a central government. It has not about it the least semblance to the Anglo-Saxon ideals of municipality and of local self-government.

These principles of course grew very slowly. There were many difficulties in the way. For it must be remembered always that if the Company could not exist without the Crown, neither could the Crown in India without the Company.

India is poor. She is not perhaps poor actually, measured in her own standards, and measured as other nations measure themselves, but she is very poor by our standard. Her rupee is as our pound. It goes as far in country products, whether men or material. But the cost of our English government must be calculated in pounds as we ourselves reckon, and is even more expensive than English government in England. That is to say, English officers and men require more pay ; English material, such as guns and ammunition, cost more. A great deal of money, or its equivalent, must be remitted to England every year to cover this.

Only an increased trade, both local and with England, could cover such an expenditure, and only the Company could carry on such a trade. Without a Company to provide it with the sinews of war, and

the method of transmitting the value abroad, no foreign administration could exist.

If this were true then, it is just as true now. English trade and English government in India are united. Each is dependent on the other, absolutely dependent.

Unless peace and good order and respect for government obtain, trade is impossible. Without English trade and traders, the Government of India would be bankrupt to-morrow. And if it were bankrupt, it would end.

Thus, in a way of speaking, it is quite true to say that the Company established British rule, even though it was itself incapable of good rule. It made the Crown rule possible, and it gave that willing and loyal co-operation without which it could never have come.

Little by little the Crown, working mainly through the Company, introduced reforms and the necessities of good order.

It created High Courts of Justice which were not subject to the Company's orders, and it appointed Governors-General. The Company still had its monopoly of trade, still mixed up business and rule. But the control of the Crown ever increased, and the Company ceased more and more to be a Company of traders, and became but a department under the Imperial Government. Then at last the catastrophe of the Mutiny came, and the Company ended. The Crown assumed the whole government of India, and

the strange combination of government exerted by the central authority through a company of merchants ceased. All India was re-organised. The government became more centralised. The power was withdrawn more and more from the provinces to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to London. Till now the Indian administration is but a branch whose real head is in London. It is an administration the whole nation is proud of, and which other nations note with admiration and envy, for its efficiency, its solidity, its fairness.

It is the reverse of Anglo-Saxon in all its methods and ideals, and therefore it is a success. For the Anglo-Saxon, a great coloniser, is a hopelessly bad ruler of subject people. He does not understand it even now. It is against his grain, against his genius. The United States abandoned Cuba. They are anxious to abandon the Philippines, knowing that their institutions and the spirit of their people are unequal to such government.

But the merchants are Anglo-Saxons. They retain their ideas, the first of which is to make money. Other matters are indifferent, and they often regard government with suspicion and doubt. They want to exploit the people, and government stands between.

In Burma the Anglo-Saxon ideas obtain expression every now and then in the quaintest way. The Burman is first of all things a peasant cultivator, and he dislikes service. The immense extension of cultivation under our rule has been done by him, and he has

made an excellent thing out of it. He has therefore no necessity to work as a labourer. He prefers ploughing his own field to working on a road or in a mine. He can make much more money, he is free, he does not like leaving his family, and the barrack accommodation of 24 square feet for each labourer, given by the mills and by masters to servants, strikes him as horrible. For these and other reasons the Burman will rarely work for the European. The European employer of labour, therefore, hates the Burman, and he expresses this by writing very often to the local papers, and, full of a righteous indignation, says 'the Burman must go.' He would, no doubt, prefer to use a gun to help the Burman 'go,' and then bring over a native of India in handcuffs to replace him in the good old way, but unfortunately these methods are out of date. Therefore he writes to the papers and in books. Well, it is blank ammunition, and does no one any harm. And, meanwhile, the Burman does not 'go.' He increases very rapidly, and has made in a few years under our rule the great prosperity of Burma.

CHAPTER XIV

GOVERNOR AND GOVERNED

INDIA is a very great country. It extends two thousand miles from north to south; it is twelve hundred miles from Calcutta to Bombay. Even under a government that wished to centralise, the difficulty of communication before railways and telegraphs necessitated the widest discretion being allowed to its officers. Living in very different days, it surprises us to look back for over half a century and see what liberty our predecessors had. All India, and Burma too, is divided into districts like English counties, and at the head of each there is an Englishman. In the old days he was a king. Within very wide limits he could do what he liked. He kept his district quiet from his own resources; he raised and remitted revenues; he organised police. He impressed his personality upon the district as no man could ever do now. He lived in a state that now we can none of us afford; he had an authority that has now gone from us. He passed an order and there was the end, unless the matter were very serious. Even where appeals lay to higher authority, the difficulty of travelling restricted

their use. He knew the people and the people him. On his personality the government depended. To the people at large he *was* the government; of powers beyond him, of commissioners or governors they had perhaps never heard even the name. His initiative was extraordinary. For instance, 'suttee' was first forbidden by a district officer entirely on his own authority. He did it without reference, independent of what other districts did, relying on his own power. No one could imagine a district officer taking such a step now. To effect a reform like this, orders would be required from England. Yet of course then it fitted in naturally with the state of things. Such a condition was of course primitive. It was a necessity of the times, it had its advantages and disadvantages. At that time the advantages greatly outweighed the disadvantages. Now, of course, such a system would be impossible. For one thing, it required a particular stamp of man, accustomed to the ideas of supremacy and rule; and to attract such men, very large pay and comparatively little office work was required. Men of old family of a certain fortune of their own gladly accepted appointments. The life attracted them, the freedom, the authority, the high pay. I met once the son of one of these at home, and he told me of his early years in India. His father was a baronet of sufficient fortune, and he came out with pleasure to the life out here. He lived well, kept open house, had many horses. He organised great pig-sticking and hunting parties, and went into camp for weeks. He

was a little prince within his jurisdiction. No returns bothered him, no reports, none of the endless office work of nowadays. A rupee then was worth four times what it is now, and a pension of a thousand a year went further than thrice that sum does now.

But naturally a strong central government gathered up the reins as they could. The extension of rails and wires annihilated distance. A process of welding has gone on incessantly. In the old days the administration of a district varied greatly with its head. If he was energetic, it was energetic ; if he was slack, it fell into arrears. If he was personally popular, good ; but if unpopular, then it was not good. There was naturally a great deal of difference between one district and another, or between a district at one time and another.

But an ideal of government is that no difference should exist except these differences that government itself creates intentionally. Administration should be uniform, should be certain. Every one should know what to expect. Law should be clear and not dependent on who happens at the moment to administer it. Possibly under an ideal district officer the old system would work best. But ideal officers are hard to find. And of course a central government must have uniformity, or it loses its control. If it had to sit down and study the peculiarities of each district and each head of a district before passing orders on a matter that came up, its work would be interminable and impossible. Its control would disappear.

Therefore it says always 'fall into line,' both to

provinces, to districts, and to its officers. The work of government is so vast, that unless it goes as a machine, it cannot go at all. Wheels must fit into their places. It is impossible to have one district go slow and another fast. And to ensure this uniformity there must be many laws, many rules, much supervision, a great deal of appeal allowed.

The defects of the system are its want of life, of flexibility, of adaptation to local conditions. But this is inevitable. All governments tend to it. Where are the powers of the lord lieutenants of the counties gone in England, where that of the Bishop of the County Palatine of Durham, of the wardens of the marches, of the lords of the manor? A central government has taken them all. The change is perhaps more noticeable here, because government has more functions than in most other countries and no local self-government has been possible.

Therefore the district officer has slowly but surely been falling from his pride of place. His power is small, his authority is very limited, he has hardly any initiative of his own. He is now but the channel through which passes the orders that come from afar. His every deed is bound by stringent rules and laws. He acts, but in response to an impulse from far away. His days are very full. His work increases, and his leisure hours are very few now. Government becomes more complicated every day, and he is responsible for all. In the olden days he passed an order, and there was the end. Now it is usually only the beginning,

for most of his orders are appealed against, and therefore he must explain his order, justify it not only by the facts, but by showing that it is in accordance with the rules and laws upon the subject and with precedent. To give a proper order is often easy, to justify it to a distant Court of Appeal, whether in a legal, or revenue, or general matter, is often hard and tedious. Yet, of course, it must be done.

And his pay now is nothing to what it was. The rupee has fallen to two-thirds its value as against gold; it has fallen far more in its purchasing power. A thousand pounds a year at home is not what it was, especially if he have a family. He must, if possible, save to help his pension. He has little leisure for shooting parties, and no means to keep open house, even if he could get visitors who had leisure. The qualities he requires are no longer knowledge of men, power of command, or self-confidence. What he needs are great power of working fast, and working long, and working accurately, an immense memory for the different Acts and Rules, great patience, and good health. If added to these he has ordinary common-sense and a little friendliness for the people, he cannot well go wrong. His every official act is bound about by rule and precedent, and beyond those official acts he had better never go.

There is sometimes a little disappointment when first he recognises this fact.

He is head of the district still. If the orders that

he gives are dictated to him, still, he gives them. He is head of all the departments which work in his district. He is the Court of Appeal for nearly all cases tried in his jurisdiction, he collects all the revenue, and if he cannot himself give remissions, he can recommend them, and if they are granted, they come through him. He appoints and dismisses the headmen of villages; the police work under his supervision. The Public Works Department in the district, the Forest Department, even the Post Office, are greatly influenced by his views. If his own voice is rarely heard, he is still the gramophone which utters all the orders that are necessary. And, of course, his personality must still, to some extent, affect these orders. He may be strict or he may be lenient, within certain limits, he may be sympathetic or hostile. It would seem, therefore, that he must greatly enter into the general life of the people. Yet it is not so. His functions, in one respect, are very wide, in another, very narrow. He stands to the people much as a physician stands to his patients. He has to do with the ills of the community, not with its health, with the failures, not the successes.

As long as the community is law-abiding the district magistrate is not concerned with it. He knows nothing of it. But when a crime is committed, then he is concerned with it. As long as traders trade in peace and honesty the District Judge hears nothing, but when they quarrel, they appear in his Court.

The majority who pay in their revenue properly

never detach themselves; the collector knows only of defaulters. Unless a monk violate the law, or a religious community come into the courts, the whole great organism of religion exists and grows beyond his ken. He is concerned only with the faults of his people. He stands to them as the surgeon of their diseases—that is all. That the peace and prosperity that obtain are due to the government, and his work is nothing. He does not appear directly there. Just as a community may be healthy because the doctors keep off and cure disease, yet the community will always rather associate them with the disease they banish than with the health they ensure.

The people respect and fear the District Head as they do the doctor; the less they see of him the better.

Thus he sees the people's life go on without him. They are born, grow up, they marry, they die, and he knows nothing. They have joys and sorrows, they have their work, their pleasure, their trouble, without him. There is the family life, the village life, the religious life, and he never sees into it. The community is as a great tree that grows, its veins full of sap, full of a thousand energies, and he is but the gardener. He is the gardener with but one duty, to guard it from outside hurt and to remove diseased branches. Of its real life he knows nothing—how the sap ebbs and flows; how the leaves come and go; why the fruit ripens or remains green. He dare not touch it, knowing his ignorance. He is far apart.

Perhaps at first he tries to overcome this. They ask him to their festivals; he goes. They have boat races. A dozen or more boats, with fifteen to thirty paddlers in each, meet to try results. He supposes it is a regatta, and that at each meeting they decide which is the fastest. But no. It is a series of matches, wherein there are continuous discussions as to the terms and the wagers, discussions that continue may be for hours, and which he cannot understand. Three heats may take six hours. He is not personally acquainted with any of the crews, and it is indifferent to him who wins. The great crowd who rush and shout and cheer and dance along the bank can lend him none of its gaiety. He is bored.

He sees a play. The language is so difficult he cannot follow. The music is only a noise, unpleasant, and very loud. The gestures are strange. And the plot extends from ten in the evening until five next morning. Incidents are few, action is delayed. Accustomed to a drama crushed into two hours, he grows very weary.

For the Burmese, like all young people, live slowly. They do not thirst after sensation; a little goes a long way. They can eat plain food materially and emotionally. There is no hurry, especially about pleasure. Life has lots of time. They do not dash from one emotion to another.

It all seems to us so very slow. We are an old people and we take our days as old men in a hurry.

Perhaps he goes to a religious festival, only to feel

himself a worse intruder than ever. The people live outside him. Their thoughts are not as his.

He tries to make friends with some; with what result? What can they talk about? Crops? What does he know of crops? Village scandal? Oh! What else? Well, it usually ends in this—that after deadly silences the official begins to describe England, and the visitor is deadly anxious to be off.

No. Community of tastes, of work and pleasure, of race and custom, only these can make men friends.

And beyond all this difficulty, because of it in fact, arises another curse—suspicion. The native bores the Englishman, the Englishman bores the native. The Burman feels like a schoolboy before a master. He takes no pleasure in talking to an Englishman, and he is keenly aware that the latter takes no pleasure either. They are best, far best, apart. A Burman will never come and see you for your *beaux yeux*, nor even for your wit. It follows, therefore, that if he comes to see you, it is for a purpose. He has something to gain. And as the only side on which you touch the Burman at all is official, it must be some official gain. He wants to speak to you about a case may be, or to gain an official favour. He comes to you privately instead of in office, because he wants to get at you. I do not mean that he wishes to bribe you; attempts at bribery to Englishmen are very rare; but he wants to influence you in some unrecognised way, some way that you cannot allow; perhaps it is to tell

you scandal of his opponent, or to flatter you into complaisance. There is not ever, there could not be, any other reason for a man or woman coming to visit you except they wished some gain.

Yet sometimes the object may be very carefully hidden.

There was once the head of a district, very energetic, very zealous, very anxious to be friends with all the people. He liked them, and they liked him. He wanted to see more of them, to increase the intimacy and the friendliness. He asked them to come and chat to him after office hours. Occasionally one or two came.

Presently the 'two' dropped off, and the 'one' remained. He was a merchant in the town, a man of good standing, of considerable wealth for a villager, a sportsman who knew a pony, and a man of influence.

Yet he had no official position, was not a municipal councillor, a board elder, or honorary magistrate, or anything else connected with government. He never asked for any land grants, he petitioned for no exceptions, he had no relatives in troubles.

He talked mostly of racing ponies, and for long periods he would sit in the verandah and chew betel and be happy. If any Burman ever visited a European out of sheer friendliness, without any ulterior motive, it seemed to be this merchant, and the official was much pleased. He took it as a compliment to himself.

Well, after some months of this there was a row

one night in the town. This merchant, while crossing a monastery compound, was set upon and nearly killed. There was great excitement. An inquiry followed, and soon facts came out. Alas, for this pure and simple friendship! This merchant had an object. He was ambitious. But his ambition lay not towards honours or money, it lay towards religious sway. He wanted to be the leader of a religious section of the town, to obtain a certain monastery for his monks, and displace those who disagreed with him. To this end had been his visits. He came and sat in the official's verandah and smoked and talked 'horse,' and when he went away he said, 'You all see me, I have been half an hour with the Deputy Commissioner. I told him all about you and the monastery. He says I am quite right. To-morrow, out you all go; my men come in. If you won't, the police will take you to the gaol.'

There are, I think, few people more capable of gratitude and friendship than the Burmese. They are very quick to recognise when you mean well to them or not, and anything you do to help them. But they do not like being bored; they hate being interfered with; they become desperate when you bother them.

Here is another story.

An official was leaving a district wherein he had served for a year or thereabouts. He was to cross the river by launch. In the evening, his kit having crossed over ahead of him, he strolled down to the

river bank to get on board. But the launch was not yet back from the other shore, so he sat under a tree to wait. Presently an old man walking along noticed him and stopped. Another man joined him. After a little hesitation they came to near where the officer was sitting. The officer took no notice and smoked on. The group increased to three, then four and five.

They approached nearer. One of them spoke.

'Your Honour's going away?'

'Yes.'

'Not to return?'

'No.'

A pause. Then the official asked,

'Who are you?'

They named themselves — merchants, cultivators, elders of the town. He nodded.

'Yes, I remember some of you, of course.'

The spokesman continued. 'We are very sorry you are leaving.'

The officer nodded. It was usual politeness.

'We are *truly* sorry.'

The officer, also polite, said *he* was sorry to go; the place was healthy, and the work light, as the people did not bother.

The spokesman nodded again. 'There was once,' he said reminiscently, 'an Honour here who pleased us when he went.'

'Ah! indeed,' said the officer; 'he was more strict with you than I was.'

'No.' They shook their heads. 'Not that.'

'What then? What did he do?'

'He talked to us. Every Sunday he sent for us, and we went to his house and we all conversed.'

He groaned at the reminiscence; the other elder also groaned. Then they laughed.

'A whole hour,' said one.

'Was that all?'

'He used to come to our homes, too, and talk. He used to give us advice about our cattle—out of a book; how we should cultivate our fields—out of a book; how we should educate our children—he a bachelor. He used to interfere in village matters, and would talk to the monks.'

The officer laughed.

They were very glad to see him go.

'And I?'

'Your Honour?' they all said in chorus. 'We never saw your Honour except in court, or in business which was finished very quickly. For the most of the time your Honour might never have been here at all. That is indeed the officer we respect and regret.'

CHAPTER XV

THE ORIENTAL MIND

I HEARD it said once by an officer of long experience of another who was leaving the district, that he was a good officer, though disliked by the Burmese. And he added: 'No one who does his work well can help that.'

We are, of course, strangers here—strangers who have come from a far country and conquered this land and made it ours. The laws are ours, the power, the authority. We govern for our own objects, and we govern in our own way. We are strong enough to enforce our own wishes, even against those of the people. And in fact our whole presence here is against their desires. That we should under such circumstances be popular or be liked is an impossible thing. To desire it would be like crying for the moon. It would be a weakness that would render the position of any one who was possessed by it an impossible one. An alien government and an alien officer can never become popular, can never appeal to the imagination of the people, can never be other than alien in thought and act.

But to assert that therefore government and its officers must be unpopular, must be disliked, is quite another matter. It is to go too far in the other direction. It is in fact to again assert an impossibility. For if an alien government can never be popular, so it can never be unpopular nor disliked. If the first would involve a contradiction in terms, the second would involve a contradiction in fact. For an alien government exists, and can exist only by the consent of the peoples it governs. It must have that consent, given grudgingly may be, given under the pressure of wants—a consent that is but temporary, as a schoolboy submits to discipline; but still it must be there. That our government has this tacit consent no one will doubt. It has earned it by its strength, by its efficiency, by its inevitableness. And therefore, if never a popular government, it is never, and can never be, an unpopular one. It must earn always respect and fear and confidence, for on these its very existence is based.

And if it be so generally, it is so particularly; if this is true of government at large, it is true of government in detail; if true of the empire within the empire, it is true of each district officer within his district. That is the microcosm, and it affects in all main facts the life of the macrocosm. The district officer to his district is the representative of the government. As the government is not based on popular ideas, as it does not appeal to national aspirations or ideals, neither does he. What he stands for to the people is strength, law, order, and efficiency,

expressed in alien laws, enforced in alien terms, but still unmistakable. What he gives is peace and justice—the former absolute, the latter as best he can; and what he demands is respect and obedience—not to himself, but to the principles and laws of which he is the exponent. There is nothing therefore in his position to make him disliked, nothing to make him unpopular; and not only is this so, but, except to his personal *entourage*, it is practically impossible for him to be either to any considerable extent.

All his acts are so sustained by law and rule and precedent, so controlled by higher authority, that he has no scope for any exercise of personality. He stands aside, impersonal, and the lives of his people pass beyond his ken.

The district life, the national life, goes on without us. We are never leaders of the people; they never look to us for example; as individuals we come and go, and they never know. You may be in a district two years or three; then you go away, and should you again visit it, you will find yourself unknown. A headman, perhaps, here and there may remember you; the clerks in your former office may come to see you; but for the rest, it is oblivion. You are no longer the head of a district, you are only yourself, and of yourself they have neither knowledge nor remembrance. You have been a wheel in a great machine, and if machines are to work well, wheels must move all together—they must not differ one from another; they are often changed, and must be therefore interchangeable.

In this way, from the social point of view, the people miss their old officials. For they were more than officials, they were the social heads of society. They introduced and maintained good manners, they cultivated the higher form of speech, they introduced new fashions which were in accordance with the national taste. They were the patrons of all art. They led all social movements. Now that they are gone, there is no one to take their place. Burma has no aristocracy of any kind, no heads of the people, no one to keep alive national taste and feeling. The national taste, the national manner, the sense of nationality, which alone can give dignity and ease, have fallen. There is no one to keep it alive. Where we interfere we only make it worse. For these things are essentially part of a nation. A nation's art, whether of dress, of speech, of manner, or of silver-ware, is rightly the national sense of beauty applied to the national common use. You cannot impart either one thing or the other. You can no more apply Burmese art in carving to an English article like a chair, than you can adapt a Grecian urn into a coffee-pot.

Thus there has been a deterioration not less marked because inevitable. For a Burmese official of old days, dressed in his rich Mandalay-woven silks, with his gold umbrella borne by men behind him, you have a merchant or native official of to-day, riding in a cheap copy of an English dog-cart, dressed in their worthless Japanese silks. He very likely wears a bowler hat in place of a silk head-cloth, and he has cotton socks

and patent leather shoes in place of his Burmese sandals.

The demand for the beautiful brocaded silks worn at Court functions has almost disappeared. There are no Court functions. Japanese silks are greatly cheaper, and for ordinary use are quite serviceable. The silk embroideries are gone. The silversmiths no longer find a full demand for bowls, for drinking cups, and those plain vessels they make so well and ornament so deftly. Instead, they turn out weird monstrosities of teapots, trays, and other imitations of European utensils, which they cannot make and which they over-ornament. The carvers make clumsy chairs and ugly tables, painful as furniture, and on which their carving, so suitable to façades of monasteries, looks crude, unfinished, dreadful.

I do not mean that the Burmese should never receive new ideas in art, in dress, or in manners. I do not mean that the old fashions were perfect and there was nothing more to be done. I do not infer that socks and shoes, for instance, are not an improvement on bare dusty feet or sandals.

Neither do I mean that in the old days there were no changes, no importations from other countries. They were always going on. What I want to convey is, that the Burmese, while adopting faster than ever, have apparently lost their ability or desire to adapt. Under the kings they conveyed an idea or an article, and thereupon made it their own. They put their stamp upon it, they took it into their life and made it conformable to that life, part of it.

So did they do with the coloured silk head-cloths which are new in Burma in the last forty years and are all imported from abroad. Yet they are like nothing else. The colours, the knots, the methods in which they are worn are purely Burman. They adopted and adapted because their taste remained national. They were not at the mercy of the taste of foreign weavers far away, but dictated to them. 'Make my handkerchiefs in such colours and such sizes and I will buy, but not otherwise.' But now there is never any effort to so nationalise anything. If he wants a shoe instead of a sandal, he takes our cheap importations just as they are; he takes the hideous cotton umbrella from Japan; he wears cotton clothes of dreadful patterns. If he wants to sit upon a chair instead of a cushion, he buys our chairs. They do not suit him, being too long in the leg and too upright; he never thinks of modifying the design, or making a Burman chair that a Burman likes, that suits a Burman's house, a Burman's dress, and a Burman's habits. And the reason, of course, besides the loss of a Court and native official dress, is that he has to a great extent lost his pride in being a Burman. He has been humiliated. And ever since he has been told to learn. He has been shown many things, how far the world is in front of him, how much he has to learn. The West has been exalted and he has been told to accept the West as an example. He has been told he cannot improve upon what the West knows. He is being constantly urged to forget his Burmese ways. Yet when he does so we cry out. We

abuse the Burmans in Burma, the Indians in India for losing their national characteristics, their national art. We lecture them. Then we try to teach them. And when we see the result of our teaching, we are in despair. Though I do not know why. Could anything else be expected?

But, after all, such matters are but the polish, the ornament. They are in truth indicative of much, but not of all. The great thing is, what lies beneath, what are the changes that are growing in other ways in the fibre of the national character. What is the effect our rule is having. When a whole people is put into the melting-pot, the outside form must change, to be reformed again only when the metal has again crystallised.

And, meanwhile, how is the substance changing, what new alloys are coming into their lives? For the fire is hot. It is not only that the old substance melts and changes, but that new elements come in. There are new combinations and changes of the old ideas, there are new ideas that come from far away. There are even new peoples who come in. But with all strangers, men, or manners, they will live or die according as they can blend with the rest. For what will not blend must in the end disappear again. It will be thrown off as a crust when the people crystallise again into a nation. Or, to use another metaphor, the country is like a garden where the old indigenous plants are being harrowed, ploughed up, and changed, and where new importations are being planted. What

changes are coming over the native plants, which of the importations is likely to adapt itself to the soil and climate as to thrive when the foreign gardener is gone?

I do not imagine such a task can be an easy one. I do not imagine even that it can be possible to see more than a very little. For if an individual be never fully understood, even by his brother, how shall a nation? And if no one has ever fully understood even his own people, how shall he do that which is a stranger?

Yet something, I think, we can learn. It is not difficult to learn to understand even an Oriental people to some extent, if we keep certain points in view, if we remember certain facts.

An Indian or a Burman is a man just as you and I are men. In all essentials their bodies are the same, their passions are the same, they desire and hate just as you and I desire and hate. Their minds are just the same, they put two and two into four exactly as you do. There is no such thing as an Oriental mind. It is only an excuse of Occidental dulness. Remember that in all essentials man is the same as man, and woman as woman, all the world over.

Now, as to the differences. Ask a physiologist what is the difference between the body of a Hindu, a Burman, and an Englishman. He will answer that there is no real difference. The Englishman's skin is fairer, the Burman's darker, the Hindu's darkest, but the structure and functions are identical. In one the

skull is a little thicker, the shapes differ slightly in each nationality, but that is all. The Burmese race is a young one, the other two older, and so on. It is a variation of detail, and that is all. It varies according to the history, the environment, the age of the people. But the essentials are always the same. And so it is with their habits, with their minds and thoughts. There is a variation caused by circumstances and age and climate, but never a difference.

As Shylock would have said had he been an Oriental, as he was a Jew:

'Hath not an Oriental eyes? Hath not an Oriental hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as an Occidental is? If you prick us, do we not bleed; if you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, shall we not resemble you in that?'

Where are the differences?

Let us give symbols to the qualities of which we men are composed. All men are the same in this, that all the qualities that exist in one man exist also in all other men. Where they vary is in the relative importance of each quality. Circumstances, climate, and that subtle influence which we never understand, but which we call 'race,' govern the size of each quality. Some qualities are more developed, others

are less so. Thus, if an Englishman be expressed by A^3, B^1, *c*, D^{10}, E^5, and so on, a Hindu may be expressed by A^1, B^6, C^4, D^3, *e* . . ., and a Burman by *a*, *b*, C^6, D^4, and so on. But whatever quality an Englishman has, every other person has too. There are never any omissions, there are never any additions. What you find in one you will always find everywhere. There is no such thing as a quality, whether physical or mental, peculiar to East or West, or to any race within them. Whatever exists here exists there also. Whatever has once existed will always exist; whatever exists now in one man has existed and will exist for ever in every man who has come into the world. The degree varies from man to to man, from race to race, from time to time, from place to place, but that is all.

Whatever you will find here in the East you will find also in the West. Take caste. It is generally assumed that caste belongs to India, that it is purely Indian, never found outside. It has been a mystery to the West, a wonder and astonishment. It has been discussed and studied and argued about as if it were some peculiarity of India. And yet of course the instinct of caste lives in every man, in the West and in the East. The need for its exercise sometimes almost disappears and its existence is forgotten, but call up again the circumstances that require its exercise, and there it is.

It has been discovered in India after great labour, great research, and great dispute that caste arises in

three ways. Caste may arise from race, from occupation, from religion. These are the three ways it rose, they tell us, in India.

They might go further. In these three ways has caste arisen all over the world, among all peoples, greater or less according to the times.

Were not the Normans a caste in England, a caste of race?

Were not the trade guilds castes of occupation? Were not the Quakers a caste of religion?

Are not the Jews a caste of race and faith, and to a great extent of occupation?

Is any caste in India more stringent than that of the German nobility to-day? Caste is universal. At times circumstances develop it to a great extent, as with the Hindus to-day; at times it greatly disappears, as in England or in Burma to-day. But the instinct of these three castes is in every man, in every race. Some have it more, some less. Some periods raise it into prominence, some render it unnecessary. Still it is always there, always ready to leap into prominence if necessity call. Americans say they have no caste. Ask them about Dr. Booker Washington and the President.

And so it is universally. A man is a man composed always of the same materials. There is no Oriental mind. A Burman differs from a Hindu as much as a Hindu from a Greek and a Greek from an Englishman. It is a phrase invented to cover a vacancy of understanding, and to give a semblance of

substance to absurdities. If you once accept such an idea, you had better give up trying to understand anything about other men at all. For whenever you come to a difficulty, you will jump over it.

The main things to remember are that an Oriental is essentially the same as you are, that there are peculiarities to every race that affect the proportion of these essentials permanently, and that environment again affects them in a measure which varies from time to time and place to place.

And as a consequence remember that an Oriental is as sensible as any one else. He acts from motives just as you do. If you at any time think his action strange, it is simply because you have failed to understand him, not because perfectly sane and reasonable motives do not exist.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

THE King is gone with his Court his Council and his ministers. The local Wun or governor is gone, and with him all his machinery of government. We have replaced them by our own officials and our own methods. But the village communities remain, the village headman is with us still, and much of the village organisation is left. It is in fact necessary to us, and upon it is based to a great measure our own rule. I have already explained in the early chapters what the village community was like in Upper Burma before our arrival. It was a community to a great extent self-contained and self-governed. It had its own territories, its communal rights and privileges and duties; it had its own headman, who was supported and controlled by an informal council of village elders.

It must be remembered that the word 'village' denotes more than an assemblage of houses. It may contain several of these. It may spread over a wide area and form in certain cases almost a small county. It corresponds more to the English 'parish' than to the English village.

These village communities arose just as such communities have arisen elsewhere all over the world. There was first of all the camp of the original settlers who cut down the forest, planted crops, and built a village. They were isolated may be five or six miles from any other village, and had room to grow. But as they grew, and their cultivation increased, the hamlet became too small for them. Their new clearings were too far away to walk to every day, their cattle pasturing in distant woods could not be herded back each night. Thus a new hamlet was formed, distant, may be, a couple of miles from the old one.

But although a separate hamlet, it remained within the parish. Its headman was still the headman of the mother village; he usually appointed an agent in such sub-village, called a 'gaung' or head. But the headman was still the only authority. The gaung was but his nominee, and was not recognised by the higher powers. He drew no commission on the taxes collected, and had no powers. There was, as a rule, no division of the community.

Of course there were exceptions. A distant hamlet might become in time the larger of the two, and might by weight of population and prosperity outweigh the mother village. It might get a headman of its own or it might attract the headman of the mother village to live in it.

Again, in times of trouble, headmen who were strong and ambitious might broaden their boundaries by annexation, and in the succeeding times of peace

such annexation might for one reason or another still prevail.

But such were the exception. The village communities were a natural growth out of circumstances, and though they varied in different places, the main principles were always the same. The headmen were usually hereditary. Not that there was any law or rule to that effect. As far as the government was concerned, it was indifferent usually who was the head. Headmen were confirmed and might be dismissed by the government. But except in cases of rebellion such power was rarely exercised. And again, a weak or stupid headman might be forced aside by some more powerful villager. But the recognised succession was by inheritance, and many lines of headmen go back for long periods of time. In a valley in the north of Burma there are headmen called 'pot headmen,' who are the descendants of heads of companies of colonists sent there some five hundred years ago by the Tagaung kings. They received the title 'pot' because, until the colonists were able to support themselves, the captain drew rations for them from the king's treasury.

The idea of the headman was that he was the representative of the villagers, that he was to express their desires and wishes and to be responsible for them to the central government. He had certain power and certain duties both to government and his villagers. But he was not a government official. He drew his authority not from government but from the villagers,

he was responsible not to government but to his community.

Government held not the headman but the community responsible, and the community fulfilled their duties through their headman. As long as taxes were paid and evil-doers not harboured, government would never interfere. And as the headman gained his power from the community, and as his power of usefulness both to the government and the community depended entirely on his solidarity with his people, the appointment could never be bought or sold or become the appanage of any higher authority.

Such was the village community then. How is it now? What are the changes that are come to it? These changes are many, and they may be divided under two heads—changes in the community, and changes in the status of the headman. The causes of the changes were also twofold, for they are due either to the direct action of our system of government or to that stir and ferment which has followed in our wake. Sometimes the two causes have combined, but sometimes, strangely enough, their influence has been in opposite directions. For while government has sought to maintain in many respects the community in its old rights, the trend of events has made that more and more difficult.

The community was in the old days very self-contained. The villagers all knew each other well, their fathers had lived together for generations. They were very much related, and in some villages almost

every one was cousin to the next. There was occasional emigration to new lands in the delta, but even then family ties were never forgotten. The wanderer looked always to return some day. His claim in the family land existed always.

But there were few settlers in a village. Outsiders came in rarely, foreigners were few. For it is the demands of trade that bring in strangers, and their trade was very limited. Now all this has much changed, and changes fast. With the demands of trade has come a movement and a disturbance. Men go freely to and fro. Merchants come and settle, agents come and go. New occupations arise, new wants require fulfilment. Men do not stay at home anything like they used to do. In every village there are newcomers, not many, but enough to change the straitness of the village bonds. They are new to the village customs, they are sometimes impatient under the village conventions. The *solidarité* has lessened. It is still strong, of course ; the strangers are few and must always be but few. The peasant will not sell his land even if a stranger wished to buy, and the village fields will remain in the same hands, but it is not so strong as it was. It is feeling the effects of change, it is going through the evolution that all such institutions experience. Life has become wider, has become freer, and at the same time, in a sense, it is lower. The peasant has become more of an individual, with less sense of his duty to his community and fellows. United action by the village has become more rare. In the

old days a village would combine to build a bridge, a road, a well, a monastery. They hardly ever do so now. The majority cannot impose its will on the minority as it used to do. The young men are under less command, they are more selfish, each for himself, and let the community go hang. Hence the community suffers and the individual also. All morality and all strength depend on combinations; the higher the organism, the better the morality and the greater the strength. With the loosening of this comes weakness, a deterioration of mutual understanding and a lower ethical standard. Both these are noticeable to all who knew the villager twenty years ago. The new yeast begins by shaking the old bonds and forming no new ones. The people are not able to retain all that was good in their old system and at the same time accept the new. They think that they are antagonistic. Japan, however, knows they are not so. As I said before about clothes, the Burmese adopt and cannot yet adapt. The conflict of the old and new is seen continually. Yet must the village system still endure, as without it there would be only chaos. It is the one real and living organism that exists, that belongs to the people and which they understand. I am sure they will not let it go entirely.

Yet it has had rude shocks. Many of the old communities have been broken up. They were too large for our administrative needs. The headman has now so many duties to perform, he cannot fulfil his duties over any wide area. Their village lands are broken up, and new communities are formed over which we appoint

new headmen. But an administratively formed community is not like one that has grown. There is a rending asunder, and it will take long for such broken parts to form themselves into new wholes. The new headmen have not the prestige of the old men. The villagers care little for them. And in small jurisdictions the position is felt to be rather onerous than honourable.

Besides, the position of the headman has changed. He was never an official, now he is so. He was never responsible for the village, but only its spokesman. Now he is held to be responsible for it. The people managed themselves through him, but now it is government who rules the community, and the headman is its officer.

In the old days all a headman had to do was to collect and pay in taxes for which not he but the community was responsible, and to keep the peace within his boundaries. If he failed, not he but the community was reprehended. It was the community's look-out if their headman was inefficient. The elders must help him, or make him resign.

But now he has innumerable duties for which he and not the community is responsible. He must count the houses correctly for the taxes, he must arrest bad characters, he must help the police, he must trace stolen cattle, he must keep up the village fences, he must register deaths, he must provide supplies for officials, he must try certain cases by our authority, given to him by government, according to laws framed

by government. He is no longer the representative of the village to the government, but the representative of government to the village. He is personally responsible, and he is dismissed or suspended or fined for every dereliction of duty.

Thus his position is very difficult, his authority is greatly gone. Villagers have little respect left for their headman after he has been fined or scolded or sent for to sit in a court house and be taught his duty like a schoolboy. Frequent changes of headmen leave each newcomer with less authority than before. If he does not fulfil his duties, government punishes him. If he does, he may become unpopular and his life be made a burden to him. For, after all, his life is amid his people, he cannot be indifferent to what they think of him, as a higher official can. Besides being headman, he is a cultivator or trader, and half the village are his kin. A strong headman, of old family, may have of himself enough power and tact and authority to maintain his dual position, a newcomer rarely can. He often degenerates into a mere government hack, quite apart from the people he is supposed to represent.

That is, of course, the inevitable result of a strong central government. It tends to absorb all authority into itself. And if, as with our government in the East, it is ahead of the people in civilisation, in power, in organisation, it cannot leave the people to themselves. The old headman and the old community if left alone would never progress. They would remain as they were, and the influence of the government can act

upon the people only through the headman. He must become its voice to all the people.

And it is further inevitable that in many ways this function of schoolmaster is very hard for him. For he is not a schoolmaster by nature, he is one of the people. He is a pupil too. Now a sixth form boy, who was also a master, able to punish the rest of the school and liable to be punished for their faults, would find it hard, I think.

This is the position, difficult for all, for the district officer, not less than for the headman and his villagers. A death return is not sent in. What shall the district officer do? Fine the headman? It may not be the headman's fault. The villagers may have never told him of the deaths—may have neglected to report. Then the headman should have fined his villagers. It is so easy to say so. He has the power by law. Yes, by law, but what of fact. The villagers who have not reported are his relatives, and wealthier men than he is. May be one is his landlord, another his creditor. Any headman who fines his people often will soon find his position untenable. He will be avoided, boycotted. He will be harassed by incessant complaints made against him to higher authority for abuse of his powers. Say he can rebut these charges, still they cause him trouble.

What is the district officer to do? Never mind the report? He cannot do that. The report is ordered by government, and it is a report that is necessary to the well-being of the people. He must have these

figures, in order to combat disease, to stop epidemics, to protect the country. What does he do? Well, each District Officer acts, I suppose, as best he can, always remembering that controlling officers above him will want full explanation for any leniency he may show.

That under these difficult circumstances things go so well as they do is a tribute to the district officer's ability and to the general good sense of the headman and the people. For it must be remembered that the village system does still work, that it works well and is the foundation of our rule. We could no do without it. Where it fails or is weak, as in some newly settled parts of Lower Burma, crime increases, disorder is rife, influence and authority and even power go for little. If Upper Burma is so free from crime as it is, if the people are easier to rule, are more susceptible to command, and at the same time better than those below, it is mainly because the community exists and holds together. It has vitality and strength despite the inevitable shocks it has had to suffer. There is nothing so important to the people than that it should continue. It has new conditions to face, and these must be faced. It must change in ways, it must adapt itself to the times. In some places it is doing so now, but the process is slow and hard. Bonds are relaxed, but are not let go.

The place the headman used to hold as head of the community where he is weak or new, is now passing to the elders. He used to represent these people to the

government. But now that he is of the government, the elders represent the people to him. The place he has perforce vacated is being filled. It must be filled, for as years go on he must become still more and more the official, and the people will have no head. They will never in the little village matters take an official to be their arbitrator. They must have one of themselves.

I do not know if it will be thought by those accustomed only to later forms of society that I am laying undue stress upon the village system. I am sure that no one acquainted with the people will think so. It manifests its power in many ways, and nearly all of them for good.

I will mention a case in point.

I have been recently directed by government to initiate societies, on somewhat the model of the German rural banks, in the villages of Burma. The object is to free the people from usurers, and to enable them to bind their individual weak credits into strong co-operative credit societies.

I have societies in work both in Upper and in Lower Burma. And there at once the influence of the village community appears.

In Upper Burma it is still strong ; in Lower Burma it is weak. And in Upper Burma when a society has been founded, the directors chosen, and the applications for loans of the subscriber and government-granted money come in, the intention of the directors is as follows :—

'We will first lend to those amongst us who are poor

and must want the money, for we are one community and they have first call upon us. What helps them helps all, and the richer can afford to wait.'

But in Lower Burma it is different. The feeling of community is weak, the claim of others is not recognised. There is a strong tendency to keep the society among the better off, to deny its advantages to the poor. There is a distrust of man and man which the village community when strong knows not of. The society picks and chooses its members. It does not hold that fellow-villagership is any claim. Each man is for himself.

Thus while a village of a hundred houses will, in Upper Burma, give forty members, in Lower Burma the society requires five hundred households to pick and choose from. It would rather go far afield to take in a man known to be fairly well off than accept a poorer villager from home.

This will, I hope, right itself in time, it is part of the object of these societies to so right it; but it illustrates the power for good a community has when well established. It means mutual help, mutual control, mutual trust; it gives a pride and confidence worth more than any money.

Some countries have grown out of it. In England feudalism replaced the village by the manor, a change but not a difference. Men of the same manor held together as had men of the same village. To the manors succeeded counties. I remember when a boy in Yorkshire that to address a public meeting with

success you had to begin, 'Fellow Yorkshiremen,' and that brought down the house.

And now industrialism has destroyed the manor and the county. The tie has broken, the sentiment, the pride. Men play for counties and for cities, not because they are of them, their sons, their children, but because they have been bought. In municipalities alone some little community of feeling still survives.

But there is always left the nation. An Englishman is still an Englishman, still willing to suffer and to die that his nation may survive.

Is it nothing, think you, for us exiles in the East, far from home ties, forgotten by our people, to rise when we hear 'God save the King,' and remember that our country still remains to us?

And remember for the Burman there is no nation. Municipalities are exotics, they are inconsistent with the ideas of the people, they are impossible. The village is all the Burman has. In that alone he can learn self-denial, self-control, the necessity of men cleaving to one another. If that fail, then he will fail in all the qualities that are great. He will become but a man, alone; and how can a man or ten million men face the world by ones? They are but sand before the wind.

CHAPTER XVII

MATERIAL PROSPERITY

'IN those days,' said an old Burman, speaking of the time of the Burmese kings; 'in those days there was very little money. And what little there was did not appear. Men had no use for money, and if it accumulated, they buried it. Every man grew enough grain and vegetables for himself to eat, and beyond that, he only wanted salt fish. The dress of himself and his family was woven in the house, and he had no desires beyond these; except in a few large towns there were no rich men, and except again in those towns there were no very poor. There was plenty of food, and as the surplus was not readily saleable, there was often more than was necessary, and no man cared to grow too much. Silks and shoes, even coats and headcloths, were rarely worn in the villages. Everything was very simple, and life was very quiet and very pleasant. Every one was for himself. There were no employers of labour, and no "coolies." Now it is all changed. Brokers come up from Ragoon and Mandalay and buy up all they can. If a man has more rice than he can eat, or more maize or more beans or more flour, he sells it. Very often he sells it before it is reaped;

sometimes before it is sown. Cultivation has increased immensely, and yet the price of everything is three times what it used to be. You could get a yoke of oxen for fifty rupees, and now you pay as much as two hundred for a good pair. A pony cost from fifty to sixty rupees. Now you cannot get any good pony under two hundred and fifty or more. A really good pony that can amble fetches from four hundred to a thousand. Even in distant villages men are no longer content with simple necessaries. Every one wears a coat nowadays. He wants matches instead of a flint and steel. He wants European and Japanese cloth, and woollen blankets, and foreign umbrellas, and strange foods; and he wants to travel by steamer and railway, instead of walking or going in a cart or boat. They used to stay at home a good deal; now every one wants to travel. There is continual use for money, and every one has some. They no longer bury it, but it comes and goes. Every village has several rich men, and also several poor men. Instead of each man for himself, the rich employ the poor, and there is now growing a class called "coolies"; that is, labourers who have no land or occupation but hire themselves out. This class has arisen in two ways, from men who have lost their occupation, and from men who have borrowed and been sold up. Many of the old trades are now dead. The silk-weavers have been ruined by the import of cheap silks, and by the want of demand for the old embroideries. The silkworm breeders have had to stop; the steamers have ruined

the boatmen who in old days did a great carrying trade on the river. The umbrella-makers, the dyers, the saddlers, the ironfounders and blacksmiths, the coppersmiths, almost all handicrafts have suffered from the import of machine-made goods.

'The people who have done well are the cultivators. But even in Burma every man was not a cultivator, and every man had not got land. In the towns there are now many "coolies," whose fathers were well off in different handicrafts. Then again, because of the import of cotton goods, the women of the family find it hard to earn money. A girl cannot by weaving now earn enough to eat. This hurts all the poorer class, for women are born to spin and weave, and if they cannot do that, there are few things they can do. They can sell "bazaar," and that is about all. In the rice villages they plant the rice, and in the cotton villages they can pick the cotton. There is little else. Some even are coolies.

'There is perhaps ten times as much money now as there was, but it is not so well divided.'

Something like this is what any Burman who remembers the old years would tell you. Wealth has greatly increased, the change, looking back, is astonishing, and progress grows faster, not slower. Although our taxes are heavy, and are three or four times more than in the king's time, and also steadily increase, they in no way retard the general prosperity. The revenue is raised quite easily, and probably the people at large pay a less percentage on their incomes than

in the king's time. The standard of living amongst the people is far higher than in any other part of our Indian Empire. Imports and exports have increased by leaps and bounds, the traffic on the steamers and the railways is heavier yearly. There is a stir and ferment that spread always farther, and grow intenser. The country is alive with traders and brokers, buying and selling, stimulating new cultivation, opening out new markets.

And it must be remembered that the prosperity is real. It is not fictitious in any way. It is not the result of any speculation, any undue inflation of prices. It is not transitory. It is that the Burmese peasant has had suddenly opened to him a field for his energies, and a market for his produce, and that he has taken full advantage of both. The increase of cultivation of rice in the delta, due to emigrants from Upper Burma, is enormous. Populations have doubled in a few years, and the yield of rice has increased in still greater proportion. The Burman is a superb cultivator, thoroughly inured to the climate, hardy, active, and with a profound knowledge of how best to make use of the varieties of soil and climate. He accepts at once new staples that will succeed, and avails himself to the full of every market change. Does cotton rise, he extends his cotton fields; does sesamum oil offer a better market, he displaces the cotton for the oil seed. Is there a boom in beans, he doubles his export in a year. Should the price of cattle be high in one place and low in another, the breeder and the broker know at once.

The high demand is met, and the poor market left to right itself. He knows when to hold and when to sell, and he is well enough off to be able to do this. He is not at the mercy of every ring. New facilities for carriage or for sale are at once used. He does not dislike an idea because it is new, all he wants to be sure of is whether it will be profitable. If it is, then that is what he wants.

The theme of the prosperity of Burma is so often in the lips of speakers, the press is so full of it, and the ordinary book of travel is so fond of it, that it is not necessary to enlarge. The general wealth has largely increased, and that increase is due, first, to our government in opening the country, and secondly, to English merchants for creating the demand. For it must not be forgotten that this demand for Burma's surplus products is made by English trade; the rice is milled in English owned and managed mills, and shipped to England and the Continent in English bottoms. It is the same partnership I called attention to before. Without English government, English trade, or in fact any great trade, could not exist; without English merchants there could never be enough revenue to enable an English government to pay its way. As in the old days with the Crown and the Company, so now with the Crown and the merchants, they depend each on the other.

The prosperity, therefore, of Burma is great, and it is due to English governance and English trade! It is no doubt a matter to be proud of. And yet it is

easy, I think, to exaggerate its importance, to give it greater value than it deserves. For though money is a good thing, trade also a good thing, they are not everything. The life of an individual, still more of a nation, depends on more than its success in following the golden calf. Life is a very complex matter, and money influences it only to a small extent. Until a man has enough to eat and drink and wear, it may be the most important thing in life; but after that, its importance decreases rapidly. Moreover, even prosperity has its drawbacks and its failures. Let us consider some of them.

Our system of free trade, letting in the products of machinery controlled by great capital, has killed all the handicrafts of Burma. It may be admitted at once that none of these were large, they were the simple village industries of a simple people. Again it may be admitted that the imported goods are as a rule better than those locally made, in many cases much better. The carpenter's tools, the steel axes and knives, the cotton cloth, are instances; and they are cheaper. Moreover, a Burman can, even as a coolie, earn more money now than he did in his old handicraft. He is more productive. If the production of wealth were all a man had to do, if it were his end and aim, then there would be no more to be said. But *pace* the Cobden Club, a man and a people are more complex, and are capable of better things than even the finest minting press. Their value is to be reckoned not in terms of what they have, but what

they are. In the end, it is the man who counts and not his money.

How are men made? How do you bring up your boys to be useful to the nation, to be men you can be proud of, to live lives that they can take a pleasure in living? Do you say, 'The thing you can do best and which you can make most money in is, say, electrical engineering, therefore stick to that, do not bother about anything else. Give your whole time and effort to it. Every hour you devote to anything else is a waste of money. Read no books except on that subject, take no interest in anything but that. You say you have a hobby for photography? That is a sheer foolishness. If you want photographs, buy them. The photograph specialists will sell them to you much cheaper than you can take them. You want a day off now and then for volunteering? What is the use of a volunteer? Make money and buy the soldiers necessary to protect you. You want to play football. There again a waste of money and energy and time. Take an hour occasionally and see a cup tie. That is better football than you can play.'

Do you say that?

No.

'Be a master of one subject, but learn something of many.' In fact, to be a master of one subject you must learn something of many. Specialism carried to excess becomes short sight, and then blindness; and if it is so with individuals, is it other with a whole people? In England we excel in so many ways that we have

never been narrowed in our choice. Yet, even in England, men have their doubts.

There is no advice so frequently given to the Burman as that he should not put all his eggs in one basket. He grows rice and rice and more rice; he ought to grow many other things, and take up many other trades. But, as usual, the advice is given without knowledge. The Burman does not put all his eggs in one basket because he wants to, or because of want of pliability, but because circumstances force him to do so.

In Lower and parts of Upper Burma rice is the only crop that will grow on most of the land; it is far the most paying crop, and it is in demand by the merchants. It is the only basket that will hold his eggs, therefore he is obliged to use it. No other grain will grow, and for fruits the market is small and the demand already fully met. He cannot take to handicrafts, because he cannot compete with the capital and machinery of the West. He cannot grow silk for a like reason, nor can he weave it. The imported European shoes and umbrellas, and other such articles, have killed the home product, partly because they are cheaper, partly because natural taste is dead. Where are the other baskets? As matters stand, he can make a great deal of money out of rice, and so where it will grow he has abandoned every other occupation for that. Yet the people, though making much gain, makes thereby also a loss. The life of the villages is duller. There is too much sameness about it. There is no scope for variety of ability or taste. A man

wants to be an artisan, he has the hands and brains of an artisan, he has not, perhaps, the constitution for the very heavy field-work. He cannot be an artisan. He may be a clerk, a trader, or a cultivator. That is about all. Villages now consist of traders and cultivators, with, on the river, some fishermen, and that tends to narrow their minds and their outlook. They are too much of a muchness, as Alice would say. There is not the varied interest of other days. They cannot talk or think politics, because there are none; there can be no intrigues, such as cheered up the monotony of old days, because there is nothing to intrigue about. There can't be any adventures, because the only adventure possible is to commit a crime. No one can exercise his brain by thinking out improvements in looms, or embroideries, or lacquer, or iron-work, or boat-building, new designs for shoes, or even new toys, such as they used to invent. They can discuss crops and manures, and the rise and fall of prices, and that is all. And that does not, I think, tend to brightness of mind.

Moreover, there is, of course, the economic danger, far off perhaps, but always possible.

Suppose the rains failed for a couple of years, suppose the rice developed a blight, or an insect pest or other disease; suppose a widespread epidemic among the buffaloes and cattle. There is nothing to fall back on, at least in Lower Burma. In the dry lands of Upper Burma the crops are so much more varied, that generally a season that hurts one crop suits another, and a

disease that injures one spares the rest. Still, in Upper Burma the want of any resource but agriculture still remains.

I hope it will not be thought for a minute that I wish to in any way undervalue the great prosperity we have brought to Burma. It is a great and valued gift, and one they needed. The people have been made richer, their lives have been made, in some ways, wider; their horizon, if narrowed in some ways, has been broadened indefinitely in others.

On account of their prosperity, they can have steamers and railways, roads and bridges, greater comfort and security of all kinds.

If in some other ways they have lost, that is inevitable. Every medal has its reverse. And I think we are strong enough and courageous enough not to keep our faces always turned to the bright side of our rule. A just relief of shadow is not only inevitable, but it makes the sight clearer and better. A dead level of brightness is apt to tire one, and, in the end, to render one somewhat sceptical, may be.

CHAPTER XVIII

CRIMINAL LAW

THE law that was in force in the Burmese kingdom was founded on the Laws of Manu. Who was Manu? I do not think any one quite knows. The laws are probably not the work of any one man, but are a collection of customs which obtained some three thousand years ago in Northern India. They embody the ideas and necessities of a simple race living in a quiet time. There is no distinction between criminal law and civil law, nor is there any distinction between those offences which are public offences, that is to say, against morality at large, such as theft, and those against private persons, such as assault. The code is very mild, and almost all offences can be paid for. It does not seem to contemplate any machinery of judge and magistrate as necessary. The accused person could agree with his adversary quickly without any intervention. Only in case of refusal would a resort to authority be necessary.

The criminal law generally in force in Burma was this code of Manu, modified by the necessities of the times and by local custom. Almost all small offences

were dealt with in the village. There was but little crime, and the community controlled it. The repression of the bigger crimes, such as murder, robbery, and dacoits was under the control of the local governor. But as he had no organised police, this was frequently neglected. A murderer or robber would be pursued and killed by the relatives of his victim, or the village community would arrest him and hand him over. When so handed over, the alternative punishments were death, flogging, or fine. In the absence of any prisons, nothing else could be done. If a locality became too disturbed, the central government might send down a special officer with troops to restore order. On the whole, in the very primitive state Burma was then in, the system, if not quite adequate, did not glaringly fail. Burma was probably quite as peaceable as England a hundred and fifty years ago, when we had two hundred different offences punishable with death and the country was dotted with bodies hung in chains.

To this has succeeded that complete system of criminal jurisprudence which has been perfected in India, and is founded on English law.

Civil and criminal laws are divided by a strict demarcation. There are different courts for each, different codes, different procedure. Criminal law deals with offences against public and private morality; civil law with inheritance, transfer of property, and such matters.

And again, criminal law is divided into two codes.

There is the Penal Code, which enumerates and defines each offence, and allots to it the limits of punishment which may be awarded. And there is the Procedure Code, which establishes the different Courts, and directs how offences are inquired into and tried. It is convenient to speak of these separately.

It is probable that the conception of what constitutes an offence is the same with all people. What is a murder, what is a robbery, what is breach of trust, what is mischief? They are the same all the world over. When has a man the right of private defence, and to what extent may it go is another matter that with slight modifications all people would agree on. That murder is more heinous than causing death by accident, that robbery is more heinous than theft, and forgery than misappropriation, are also matters of general consent. A penal code is in fact only a clear and very careful summary of the different offences a man can commit against persons or property or the public peace, and these are the same all the world over. There is nothing in the Penal Code which is in substance new to the Burmese. It is only a very clear, a very careful, a very concise series of definitions of principles common to all mankind.

With the system of procedure it is different. Every country has its own ideas on this point, and they differ very considerably in different peoples and at different periods. Speaking generally, the idea of

a young people such as the Burmese is as follows. They look upon the State as the dispenser of justice both to the complainant and to the accused, as the power whose duty it is to ascertain the truth, to protect the innocent, and to punish all crime. The State through its representatives is the father of the people, to whose justice and to whose power resort may always be had, and it considers that it is the duty of the State to use all its power to bring the truth to light.

And therefore they look to the Courts to do a great deal which, as civilisation progresses, no Courts can perform. No judge, no magistrate can be father to the people in the way a simple people want, in the way that patriarchal Courts might be. He cannot listen to all complaints, he cannot have all statements investigated, he cannot personally guide and direct and help. He could never do a tenth of the work even if it were desirable that it should be done at all. That the work of Courts may be done, that the machinery of justice may move forward, it is necessary to define and to restrict, and mainly to make the people help themselves.

So it happens that as civilisation progresses, the functions of Courts insensibly alter. The judge becomes less and less of an adviser, of an active power, who does things, and grows more into an umpire whose duty is not to do but only to hear; not to act, but to judge the acts of others. The litigants, whether criminal or civil, fight before him with advocates for

their champions, and evidence for their weapons, and the judge marks the points gained or lost.

This gradual change can be traced in the history of the development of all peoples. The judge is, to begin with, the father to whom the children come and demand justice, and whose duty it is to investigate all complaints, to find out all the evidence, and to decide. The suppliant has nothing to do but to demand justice; the judge does all the rest. But, little by little, this is found to be unworkable, and the Courts more and more demand that every litigant must get up his own case. He personally knows what he wants to prove, and he must find his witnesses and bring them to the Court, instead of asking the Court to get them for him.

Now this is a very great change. It is not perhaps a change of principle, because the object of all Courts is to administer justice as quickly and as well as possible, and the change of procedure is merely to meet changed circumstances, and when the change has come slowly, has developed *pari passu* with other things, it is not noticed. But it can be understood that to a simple peasant people it may seem that the alteration has been very great. It may appear to them that the very foundation of justice has been moved, and they may feel bewildered and at sea.

It is true that there is one large exception to this rule of the Courts, that complainants must produce their own cases. Whenever a serious crime has been committed, the Government, through the police, does make inquiry, does get up the case and prosecutes it in

the Courts. But the defence is left to the accused person to find himself, and in smaller criminal cases, and all civil cases, the Court is not concerned at all with the production of evidence. It judges, and judges only.

It seems thus to the villager that justice has gone farther from him. He forgets how much better our system works than his did, or could ever do; he does not realise that if he would but learn to use our Courts aright, they would give him all he wanted. What does he know of this? He has no knowledge and he cannot reason. But he feels dimly that whereas he ought to find a help and comfort in our Courts, he finds only justice—and that to get that justice he must himself work and help. The Court is not a paternal dwelling where he can ask for bread and get it, but it is a mill wherefrom, if he require flour, he must himself bring the wheat. He must provide the evidence for his side, as the other party does for the other side, and the Court then will sift and grind it.

If he bring nothing, he will get nothing. To ask and pray, unless he has been the victim of a criminal wrong, is of no use. The litigant must fight, and if he is not skilled—as how should he?—he must hire a champion to fight for him. He must spend money. Justice is not free, it cannot be free. Law is the most expensive thing the world knows of. But how should he understand these things, jumped as he has been from one era to another.

Therefore, of all our machinery of rule, of all our

institutions, there is none, I think, the people understand less than they do our Courts. There is nothing they so misuse, there is nothing they so little respect. They lie in our Courts as they would never do outside, they make false charges, false defences, they forge documents, they produce false evidence. Whereas we have provided for them honest Courts, they have turned them to dishonour; whereas we have provided mills to grind their wheat, they bring us chaff. And when we reproach them, they say, 'We look to you for help, and you do not give it. You tell us to help ourselves. Why do you then object when we do so? Is not all fair in love and war, and are not the Courts but lists that you keep that we may wage our private wars?' And when we object and say, 'But there are rules; our lists have laws, and one of these is that those who come therein should speak the truth,' they laugh and say, 'If that be so, why not punish those who lie? 'If we lie, as you say we do, why not put us in prison?' And to that we have no answer. For, in fact, that goes to the very root of Courts. There may be punishments provided for those who swear falsely, who make false charges, who write forged documents; but by the very nature of things they can very seldom be awarded. There is nothing on earth so difficult to prove as that a man has deliberately lied. For a man may be mistaken, he may have forgotten, he may have mixed up two persons or two events or two dates, or he may be speaking the truth though it seems a lie. How can a judge ever be sure that a lie is really a lie?

And if you once begin punishing men for mere mistakes or errors, you would empty your Courts in no time. No one would come, truthful or untruthful, unless great latitude were allowed to all people to say what they would. You cannot purge your Courts by penal laws against falsehood. You cannot force a man to tell you the truth any more than you can force him to honour and respect you. Public opinion outside the Courts will do it, never penal treatment within. But of the untruth within the Courts, public opinion takes no note. It does not reprobate it, does not condemn it, does not consider as a rule that a man has departed from the path of honesty and rectitude because he lies in Court. If he lied outside, it were another matter.

Thus a man will admit to you without a blush that he has lied in Court; but if you say to him, 'How then can I tell if you are speaking the truth now?' he will be very angry. 'A man to man speaks truth,' he will reply; 'but in the Courts, well, it is different.' Why?

CHAPTER XIX

COURTS AND PEOPLE

THERE could be few studies, I think, more fascinating than that of the relationship of people to their Courts, of their respective morality without them and within.

In no Courts anywhere in the world is the morality within as high as that without. Not though the judge represent authority and justice, not though each witness speaks upon his oath, not though there are penalties for falsity and fraud, is truth so often found within the temple of justice as in the ordinary walks of life. Even in England of to-day the judges from the bench refer from time to time most bitterly to the perjury they hear. And in the old times it was worse. Professional witnesses could be bought for a song to swear to anything, and few men, however strict, would have hesitated to perjure themselves for any cause they thought was right. The trials of a hundred years ago teem with false evidence of all kinds.

In other countries it is no otherwise. The standard varies, from what causes we know not. If all we hear of some of the United States Courts be true, it is there very low indeed. It is perhaps higher in France than

in any other great country. But I have never been able to find that any one has cared to know the causes of these things. Of law, of equity, of *personnel*, of procedure, the lawyers of all ages have written and write interminably; of the relationship of peoples to their Courts no one has ever cared to know anything.

Yet there is nothing so vital to the due administration of justice as this, that the people should honour, should understand, and should deal rightly with their Courts, should observe in them the same high standard of morality that they observe without. For justice is the result of a partnership. Be the judges ever so honest, the Bar ever so acute, the law the clearest and best in the world, these alone cannot succeed. They are as a mill that turns. The quality of the miller's output depends on what is put into his mill. The quality of the output of justice depends on what the litigants and their witnesses say. No mill, however perfect, will make good flour if chaff and stones be largely mingled with the wheat; no Courts, however good, can be a success unless the evidence given there be honest.

Therefore it is most essential that both parties, the Courts and the people, should work together to the same end.

Yet they never do so fully. Nowhere in the world, at no time in history, have people and Courts ever pulled perfectly together in double harness. Sometimes the division is very great, sometimes it is less.

It is always there. A perfect understanding has never existed. And of the qualities in either that must go to the good understanding no study has ever been made. It has been answered that clear law and honest judges should and will ensure justice; that if the people respect the *personnel* of the Courts, all will go well. You might as well say that uprightness in a husband and respect in a wife will ensure happiness in marriage. The only sure bond of happiness is sympathy and understanding; of that alone confidence is born. I do not entirely know why this is wanting between our Courts and the people. Our objects are the same. There is nothing political about our Courts; we have no axes to grind in them. We try always to hold the balance even, never to allow ourselves to be led away by anything but what we think is righteousness. Our law is very much the same for all. Such differences as exist are the result of different circumstances, and are an attempt to make law nearer to justice, not farther from it.

If the Courts wish to give justice, the people want to receive it, and their desires and ours are the same, and our ideas of justice differ very little from theirs. We would that they could help us instead of so often hindering us.

I have said that I know little of the reasons why the people misuse our Courts, and in any case it is not a subject that one could discuss in a chapter. It would require whole volumes to itself. Perhaps some day some lawyer will think it as worthy of study as

the barren fields of law. And meanwhile we must get on without. But there are one or two points that are, I think, obvious.

For one thing, Courts established by an alien ruling power have never had the confidence of the ruled to the extent that native Courts have had. It was not till the Saxon people of England gained control over the procedure of the Courts that there was any rest; and even then, and even now, there is indeed from time to time a latent antagonism between Courts and people. In Ireland the difference was and is even more marked. In the France of two hundred years ago the people disliked all men of 'the long robe.' There is always a hidden distrust, and, as far as I can learn, this distrust has never been founded on any other ground than a sentimental one. Courts have not succeeded simply because they were good, or failed because they were weak or even corrupt. The difference is one of temperament and outlook and origin. The people are the people, and the Courts are representatives not of them but of the ruling power.

Still I am quite aware that this is not a full explanation, there must be much else. For if it were even the main factor, it would follow that executive officers, who represent Government far more fully than judges do, would be even more apart from the people than the latter. But they are in fact much nearer. I have found, as I suppose every officer has, that a man will lie to me when I am a judge in Court, yet will tell me the truth outside when I am an executive officer or a

private individual. Perhaps, again, personality has something to do with it. A Court and a judge are impersonal, whereas an executive officer is much of a personality. He is concrete, whereas the Court is abstract. He is a man of flesh and blood, whereas law and judges are merely principles. And people, all people, but especially early people, like and respect and honour men, but fear and distrust principles. For if men can never live up to principles, neither can they all live down to them. *Summum jus, summa injuria.* Men also respect force, but have little admiration for umpires.

There is again the fact that the people generally do not admit the authority of our Courts to administer oaths. For our Courts are English and Christian. Even if the judge be a Buddhist, he is there as representative of an unBuddhist authority and power, and how can a Court of one faith administer the oath of another? Can a Buddhist administer a Christian oath? can a Christian administer a Buddhist oath? And if so, is it a sin to break it?

Who shall answer such questions? Who, if he answer them, can make others believe what he says? But I have seen that whereas a Burmese considers the oath he makes to his own monks and to his own pagoda to be a sacred thing, he often holds the oath he takes in our Courts to be a negligible matter. And of course there are other reasons, very many of them, all true more or less. The only reason that is never true being that usually given, that the Burman is in essence untruthful. For that is not so. Neither is

there any truth in that facile explanation of the unseeing, 'the Oriental mind.'

I do not know if it will be thought that I have overdrawn the picture. It has not been intentional. All Burmese do not lie in Courts. Very many, certainly the majority, still tell the truth as they understand it, very many do help us as best they can. Burma has not fallen to the level of India. It can never do so.

And although the perjury and untruth do hamper the wheels of justice, they do not clog them. In every case there are some witnesses who speak the truth, there are some facts that guide the judge. He can generally be fairly sure of main events. He can sift the chaff and the dirt from the grain. And if his flour takes much longer to grind, and if the mill suffers in the toil, still is the out-turn good.

Therefore justice does not suffer so much as might be thought. And in the future we must all hope that as the years go on the sympathy between the people and our Courts, the mutual understanding and the knowledge, will increase, and that then we shall get nearer to each other. For that is what we both need. Then will the work be easier for us both.

There are one or two main points connected with our Courts that are worth considering. No one who has had much to do with revising the judgments of Burmese magistrates will have failed to note how different in some matters are the Burmese ideas of the gravity of certain offences to our ideas. They will award heavy sentences for what to us appear trivial offences, and

they will let off very lightly other offences that seem to us heinous. They have in some matters a different moral scale. Thus to us ordinary assaults are very trivial matters. They are seldom worth bringing to a Court at all, they are best settled between man and man. Our average Englishman of the working classes would be ashamed to be always running into Court because of a blow. He would return it and the matter then would end. Boys fight, men fight, and the matter ends. Complaints in such matters would be laughed out of Court.

Yet in India and even in Burma men rush into Court for the slightest causes. A word of abuse, a threat, a slap, a blow, such things furnish a very large part of the litigation in our Courts. And if Burmese magistrates were allowed their will, they would deal with them in the most serious manner. A fine of six months' earnings for an insulting word, a month's rigorous imprisonment for a light blow between man and man, such are sentences I have often had to revise.

While for offences against property, for theft, or misappropriation, they will give sentences that seem to us totally inadequate.

Of course this all comes from the different outlook on life, the different histories of two peoples. We who have fought our way all our lives, as boys, as men, as a nation, are accustomed to the rough and tumble. We are harder, stronger, more ready to strike, more ready to accept blows. We fight and we forgive.

They do not fight and do not forgive. Their temperament is, in a way, more like that of the Latin races of Europe. They are hot and sensitive and fiery. Their passions are quickly roused, and then they forget themselves. They cannot fight as we do, so they use the knife to revenge themselves.

They set a higher value on personal dignity than we do, but on property they set a lower.

Very often a man who has lost property will not complain at all. The thing is gone. Why bother? After all, he thinks, what does it matter? Money is a smaller part of life to them than it is to us. They have not the use for it, they do more easily without it. A man will often chuckle as he tells you of some unfortunate speculation of his own, as if it were a good joke, or of a theft from his house as a witticism of fate. Though I think, of later years, they have begun to value property more.

Therefore sometimes they do not understand the way or the outlook that we take on life. They think that we are harsh in places and unduly lenient in places, just as we think of them. But as our higher Courts are all English, our view of life and punishment must prevail. It must be remembered that the weight of a sentence is not and cannot be a question of law. No law could lay down exactly any scale of punishments. Theft is of all kinds, and the law says it may be punished with an hour's detention or lifelong imprisonment. A man who strikes another may by the Code be fined a penny, or sent to gaol for seven

years. What is an offence and what is not the Code can say, but what in each case is a fit retribution for the offence no Code could tell. It depends on the details and on the outlook on life that the judges have. Our outlook is the English outlook, theirs is the Burmese. For our sentences to give full satisfaction, either the Burmese must adopt our view of life or we must adopt theirs; but whether any approximation will occur only the future can tell. I think, perhaps, they may approach us slightly. But the difference is at heart so radical, so engrained in the natures of two nations, that a close agreement can never come. An Englishman will never become a Burman, a Burman will never be an Englishman; we come from different pasts, we live in different presents, and we go into very different futures.

There is one other point.

I read and hear continually that many of our native magistrates and judges and police are corrupt. I am told that they take bribes, that they falsify cases, that they make right into wrong.

I wish to say that I have no belief in such charges. Exceptions there may be, but that the mass of our Burmese fellow-officers are honest I have no doubt. All my experience has tended to support that view.

Every one in this world requires looking after requires check and supervision, requires that protection between himself and harm that only a watching eye can give, and in Burma these safeguards hardly exist. It must be remembered that official Burma has no

press to criticise it, no native society to give it tone, no organic community to help the individual in the right path. He has many temptations, and a fall is easy, unless the precipices have guard-rails. Thus the only real help a Burman official has against a fall is the constant supervision, advice, and assistance of his superior officers, and if that is duly given, he is in the main quite honest, quite honourable, quite as free from stain as the official of most other nations.

I have known 'sportsmen' who never lost money on a race but what they declared the horse they backed 'was pulled,' and I have known litigants and advocates who never lost a case in Court but what they were sure the judge 'was bribed.' It is so easy to say, it is so absolutely safe, so consoling. It is such an excellent cloak to cover one's own wrongheadedness or stupidity; and it is from people like these, or from people who speak out of pure ignorance, that the charges of corruption come.

I have as Deputy-Commissioner investigated hundreds of such charges. Very rarely have I ever found the least foundation for them. They are the outcome of disappointment and ignorance and malice. We give a policeman in England a shilling, or some beer, and we laugh. We do not call the whole force corrupt because he takes it.

But in Burma, if a constable takes a free breakfast, 'he is bribed,' if a head constable accepts the loan of a pony for a journey, 'he is corrupt,' if a Burmese magistrate has a friend to spend the evening, 'he is

touting for money'; very often when he only demands the regular Court fees for Government, he is accused of private extortion. Here is a story in point. A non-official European once told me in Sagaing that my clerks took bribes. 'No one can approach you unless they pay,' he said. 'Your clerks keep complainants away unless they pay. You think you sit in open Court and any one can approach you freely. It is not so.'

'Can you give me any single case,' I asked, 'to support such whirling accusations?'

He said he could.

I said that I awaited the instance with curiosity and incredulity. He said it was an employee of his own. 'I sent him to you,' he said, 'with a note from me three days ago. Don't you remember?'

I reflected. 'Was it a man who wanted a gun licence?' I asked.

'It was,' he answered.

'Well,' I said, 'go on.'

'I gave him a note to you personally,' he continued, 'so that he might reach you, and despite that, he had to pay.'

'What did he pay?'

'He paid twelve annas' (a shilling).

'Who to?'

'Your clerks.'

'For what?'

'As bribes, no doubt.'

I laughed, for I had guessed. He sent for him, and

then it all came out. Reluctantly he admitted that he knew that the twelve annas was rightly demanded. Eight annas was for the stamp on the formal application he had to make to my Court (private notes, I may say, are of no use, and are often only an impertinence), and the four annas was the writer's legal charge for engrossing the application on the stamped paper. The charges were not made by the clerks at all, they were the Court fees demanded by Government; and that was all the foundation this European ever had for traducing my whole office.

In such ways do these absurd accusations take their rise.

Our native officials are the cock-shies for all the misrepresentations that ignorance and malice and foolishness can invent. They have no redress. They may be splattered from head to foot with mud, and they have no revenge. There is nothing safer than to traduce native officials.

If one-millionth part of what is said were true, our government would fall from the very rottenness of its native *personnel*. That our government does well and is strong is the best possible testimony to the general uprightness of its native servants.

CHAPTER XX

CIVIL LAW

IT is probably two thousand five hundred years now since Manu lived, and the laws in his books are older far than that. They were but the compilation of customs that had grown up, of the manners that had been evolved in the generations that came before. They contain the laws of marriage and inheritance of a people who were still primitive, yet of a certain culture that developed sides of their character and left others untouched. It is strange to think that these laws, which were evolved so long ago in such another world, should be those that govern a people of to-day.

And yet, I suppose, the Burmese are not older really than the people who evolved these customs. In some ways they are not, I think, even so old. Their civilisation is even younger and narrower than that of those peoples of Northern India so many centuries ago.

That those customs suited the Burmese under their own kings there can be no doubt. They were in accordance with their wants and with their wishes; they were natural to the sheltered lives they led. They

fitted in with their other customs—with their village systems, with their religion, with the ordinary life of the villager. The laws were old and yet not old, for they were living forces. If they had not existed, the Burmese people would have themselves evolved something very similar, no doubt. And those laws, in all matters that concern marriage and divorce, the custody of children, the division and inheritance of property, are those that our courts administer to-day.

For it must be remembered that civil law is not like criminal law. In the latter there are fixed principles common to all the world. We have elaborated them into codes, and they apply, with hardly an exception, to all the peoples of our empire. The Englishman, the Hindu, the Mussulman, the Burman, the wild dweller in the hills, have all the same law of crime. But in social matters it is different. Each people has in time evolved its own marriage customs, its own ideas of the relations of husband and wife and children. The Hindu of Madras has one law, of Bengal another; the Mussulman has his Koran; the Parsee his own special code. No two people are alike. Now to each our courts administer their own law—to the Nair of Malabar the local custom whereby property descends through the female line; to the Burman the law which is written in the Dhammathats. Thus those old laws—laws which were made before Rome was founded, which were written and followed for two thousand years before we became a nation—are those of a people of to-day.

They are the laws and customs suited to a people who live among their fields, depending on the soil—where waste land still remains all round to be taken up, where wealth is not pursued, where the struggle of life is not severe, where wars and invasions are brief, and where the stranger does not come. There is no sign in them of such pressure as gave rise, for instance, to primogeniture, where the family property and power must be kept whole and in one hand. They are laws for a peaceful people living in safety, for women share equally with men. The prime necessity of defence has left no mark upon them. They are for a people whose central government was weak, and local organisation strong; for all depend on the maintenance of the community, and not the State. They tend to bind people to the soil, and are not for wanderers. Although now given under the guise of sacred books, there is in them no sign of declaration of faith. They are in no way religious, in no way connected with Buddhism, though in accordance with its precepts. They would be just as well in accordance with the precepts of other faiths. Buddhism has not gathered into its hands the control of the people in these matters. Marriage is no sacrament, as it became in Europe in the seventeenth century; nor are there any ecclesiastical courts to decide such cases. Buddhism is unconcerned with them.

Marriage in Burma is a status. A man and woman are married or are not married according to whether they live as husband and wife, or not. A man may have several wives, though in practice he rarely

has more than one. A woman may have only one husband. Divorce is a matter for the village elders. No court is necessary, no decree, no appeal to legal or ecclesiastical authority. Divorce is but the breaking of a status. A wife retains control of all her property when married; she has a half-share in all property acquired during marriage. If she is divorced, she takes her own property and half that jointly acquired. There is no blending of her authority with that of her husband. She may do what she will with her own. And all the children inherit equally. No Buddhist may make a will. Whatever a man or woman dies possessed of must be divided according to the rules of consanguinity. There is no preference of one sex over another. All children are equal in this matter. The eldest son shares alike with the youngest daughter.

Among a people living as the Burmese did under their kings such laws worked well. Are this man and woman married? The whole village knows them, knows how they came together, knows how they live. There can be no doubt. Are they divorced? The elders know, and every villager besides.

Who is entitled to their estates? The claimants are on the spot, their claims are manifest, there can hardly be any dispute. Is not every man's relationship known exactly by every one? There can be no mistake, no trouble. The fields are there, every one knows them, how broad they are, where they extend to. The cattle are known to every herd-boy. Nothing could be simpler than to settle all these questions. No

court was necessary. The parties could decide themselves. And in case of dispute there were the village elders, who knew everything about the case and could give a judgment at once. In the old times the laws worked well.

But now so much has altered. Such a strong new leaven has come in, that the old laws are being felt inadequate to meet the new state of things.

The people have taken to wandering a great deal. The astonishing development of Lower Burma has been caused by immigrants from the Upper Province. Out of the dry zone of Upper Burma hundreds of thousands of people have, in the last twenty years, gone down to the delta. Hardly a family but has one or two members in a distant district. And even in Upper Burma itself there has been much change. Men come and go. Traders establish themselves in other villages. Men used to marry always within the village circle, now they often go far afield. The frequent transfer of all government officials has increased this sense of change. They come and go, here to-day and gone to-morrow. The old stability of established things has passed away.

Thus matrimonial cases grow and come into the courts where formerly they went to the village elders. Now there is often no village council which could know. The husband is from the north, his wife is from the west, they live in a central district. How can their marriage be proved? Who can prove a continuing status where the people change so much?

There is no ceremony which could be registered, or at least remembered and noted. The absence of all ceremony has become a defect, when formerly it was an advantage. A ceremony marks a fact. A status that has no determining point is often very difficult to prove. A man runs away with a girl. Are they married or are they not? In the simple village life of other days such a matter would be decided at once. The elders would determine it. They would not tolerate any connection that was not a marriage, but now who is to settle it among strangers?

The better class of Burmans feel this already, and they have evolved a sort of ceremony. Strangely enough it is a religious ceremony, where the officiating priest is a Ponna, a Hindu. The Ponnas were, in the old days, the Court astrologers, soothsayers, and prophets. Buddhism is not concerned with such matters. And now the Ponnas are the marriage priests.

It will be interesting to note what happens in the future. Some ceremony, I think, there is bound to be. The circumstances call for it. What will it be? Will the government institute civil marriage offices as in Europe, and if so, will the people like them? Will Buddhism awake, and leaving its aloofness, become more concerned in the social life of the people and fulfil the duties that all faiths have found so necessary? Or will the Ponnas extend their influence? No one can say. But a change there is bound to be.

Again, in the division and inheritance of property new difficulties have arisen. In the old days of the

simple life there was little wealth. Men lived and worked contented with very little, never acquiring riches, spending as they went. They died and left little behind them. What they left was mostly land. There were hardly any merchants, or mechanics, or people who lived by their brains. Money was never accumulated. If a man had some money, he spent it before he died. He built a pagoda or a rest-house. The division of the land was easy. The claimants were there, often indeed the land was never divided. It remained ancestral property, one or two of the heirs might work it, the others clearing new lands elsewhere. Estates were often undivided for a hundred years or more. The heirs might be very many. But land was not saleable. It had hardly any money value. The fields might be too small to divide even amongst a few. They were, perhaps, just what one man could work. So they remained in one heir's hands, or perhaps a few heirs worked them alternately. But the right was never forgotten.

And now that the value of land has increased by leaps and bounds, these old claims are revived. Heirs turn up sometimes from the ends of Burma and claim their shares. So begin interminable lawsuits, and no one is benefited but the lawyers.

When there is a business or money, it is, in a way, worse. True there cannot be ancestral funds. Money does not descend like land. There cannot be dormant claims to cash. If a man dies, no one can claim a share but his children or their descendants. But all

children claim alike. A daughter shares with a son. Grandchildren inherit from their deceased parents. Families in Burma are very large, and if a man lives long the claimants are many, especially if there be more wives than one, as is frequently the case with rich men.

Then the law is uncertain. The Dhammathats do not agree. There are lawsuits. The fortune disappears. In recent meetings held by the Burmans in large towns, it was bitterly complained that it was worth no one's while to be rich, as the lawyers always got his money when he died. No Buddhist can make a will or influence the descent of his property after death.

Thus no Burman can build up a large business that endures. However successful he may be when alive, it must dissolve at his death. Even if there be no lawsuit, it is broken up and gone. There can be no Burman firms of any kind that endure, they come and go like phantoms. The European firms endure and grow, the Chinese, the Indian, but not the Burmese. They are handicapped in the race, and as the province develops the handicap increases. The Burman cannot be rich, cannot be influential, cannot acquire firmness and solidity. As a cultivator or a petty trader it does not matter; but a merchant, a mill-owner, a contractor, a banker cannot build up a business. How can they establish a connection and a standing, how can they gain experience and confidence, when they come and go from day to day? In the old days it did not matter, but now it is felt bitterly.

Again, if Burma was for the Burmans alone, it would not matter so much. There is much to be said in favour of the division of property. There is much to be said against accumulations, against money and land getting into few hands, against the injustices to younger children, against the rise of a proletariat. That money should be widely divided is good in many ways. It does not breed so fast, but its influence is better. If Burma were for the Burmans, there need be no change, or that but slight.

But Burma is not for the Burman only. It is flooded with outsiders. There are English and German firms in every large town. There are numerous Jew firms. There are Chinese and Hindu and Mohammedan firms, great and small, everywhere. But there are not and cannot be any Burmese firms.

Thus the higher trade and higher finance of the country is debarred to the people who are the natives of that country. They are in a position of inferiority, and they feel it. No work, no intelligence, no honesty of purpose can stand against such a handicap.

It will be said, 'Then why not change it; why not remove the handicap?'

Who is to do it?

Is it Government?

One of the foundations of the success of our rule, one of its absolute essentials, is that we respect in these matters all the customs and traditions of the people. We never interfere. We cannot interfere. The law that they accept, that is what we administer. No

Government that interfered with the customs of the people against their wishes could endure.

But if they wish it?

Truly, if they wished it and were unanimous or nearly so, and could express their wishes, it were another matter. But how can this be ascertained? The Burmese have no organisation, no method by which to concentrate opinion and express it. The only organisation in Burma is the monkhood, and that is not concerned with such matters. There are the better-off traders and Government servants and such like in the towns, but they are a minority, a small minority. The bulk of the people are peasants living in villages.

What would they think of change? To say that change would be for their good is little. Would they understand it? They have never known other customs but those, they are ignorant of the world without. How would they accept a change? No one can tell.

Yet you could not have one law for one class and another law for a different class.

For myself, I think that the people generally would resist any change if that change applied to land. No people are more attached to their ancestral fields than they are. No one feels more the dignity of being a landowner, if it be only of a hundredth part of a field from which he can never reap any benefit. He has a stake in the land. He has a village he can call home. He has a focus for his hopes and wishes, and if in the struggle of life he comes to grief, he can always go to

the relation who has the family field and say, 'Give me a little help. After all, I have a share in that field. We are co-heirs.' He gets it. They would never consent to any change in the law of realty. They would never consent to a man leaving his fields by will or to them being sold. In no way would they surrender their birthright.

But with money, or a business connection, or a trading concern, or a mill, it is otherwise. These are new things. They are not ancestral. They belong to the man who made them. They have in them none of the sentiment of land. It may be that the Burmese would agree and even welcome some change in that direction.

But prophecy is a bad business, and only the future can tell what will be.

CHAPTER XXI

HONESTY AND TRUTH

Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.

THAT is, I suppose, what most Englishmen think about the East, that man is vile, and notably, that he is very much given to untruth. It is so much taken an accepted fact as part of the 'Oriental mind' that no one takes any further trouble about it. 'The Oriental is untruthful, every one knows that, therefore there is no use considering that question, and his untruthfulness is ingrained and part of the "Oriental mind." Now, no one can understand the Oriental mind, so why bother about that? Let us accept the fact as it is.'

Well, as to this, I have two remarks to make. I am in considerable doubt as to whether the alleged general untruthfulness of the Oriental does exist to the extent asserted. And if it does so exist, there must be an explanation. I have not, as I have said before, any belief in the Oriental mind as differing from other minds in essentials. If sometimes the result seems to be different, it is because the circumstances are different. That is all. Let us therefore consider the

question. And as all questions have two sides, let us first consider that side that lies nearest to us. Let us consider ourselves first.

We come out to this country young. We come out from school or university full of instruction, but without any knowledge of men or things. Of England we know only our school life and our family life, not usually a very broad one. The great world of men that extends from the Court to the field-labourer and mill-hand is utterly strange to us, as strange as that of the East to which we come. Therefore when we come to judge the East, we have as measures of that East only ideals which are necessarily of the narrowest. We think we can compare the East with the West, but in fact we cannot do so. We think, for instance, we can partly compare a Burman peasant to an English one. But in fact we know nothing of English peasants. We have no real knowledge, but only imaginary.

For instance, we imagine that every Englishman in every walk of life invariably

(1) speaks the truth,
(2) is honest,
(3) is incorruptible,
(4) knows how to govern,
(5) can combine,
(6) is clean,
(7) is clever,

and that he has always been these things. The Corrupt Practices Act, the Secret Commissions Bill,

the chicanery of trade, the badness of much local government, the impossibility of getting the country people to combine (as they do in Denmark, for instance), the hopeless stupidity, the uncleanliness and frequent untruthfulness of the poorer classes, are things that we know nothing of. In school life, in university life, and in the home life of the middle classes, which is all we know, the standard of all these things is very high and we take them for a rule. To begin with, then, our measures are wrong. We have no just measures to measure the East, because we have no real knowledge even of the West.

Then our experiences in the East are unfortunate. When we come out, we are cheated by our servants. Indian and Burman servants, like other servants, prefer good masters to bad, and the newcomer is usually a very bad master. He has no knowledge of the language, the people, or the customs. He has never had servants before, and does not know how to treat them. He comes out as conqueror to a conquered country, and he acts accordingly. He gets the sweeping of the bazaar, is cheated, and denounces all Orientals as liars. Later on, when he knows more, he gets good servants, and when he at last goes home he never forgets them. It is the one luxury of the East that he regrets—the willing, honest, kindly service he has grown accustomed to. Every one will speak as he finds. For myself, I too was robbed and cheated years ago. My servants came and went, but now for twelve years I have always had the same. I hope that as long as the East keeps

me, we may be together. I trust them as they trust me, and they never deceive me, never lie to me. Whatever their failings, they are not wanting in honesty and truth. Most men learn this in time.

But in other matters we are not so fortunate. Is the Englishman a merchant, all he knows of the people of the country is when one of them tries to evade a bargain or an agreement. That the agreement may have been an unfair one to the native, may have been in fact impossible to carry out, he does not ever realise. He knows nothing of the circumstances or of the people, and can never judge. When an agreement is broken, he attributes it to dishonesty at once. He is apt to take advantage of his strength and, innocently of course, to drive bargains so hard, that they cannot be fulfilled. I will take an instance. A certain European bought a small estate cultivated by peasant cultivators. The agreements were that the tenants should pay the landlord half the crop as rent. For a year or two all went well. Then it appeared that the crops grew shorter and shorter. His share was smaller and smaller, and on inquiry at last, he came to the conclusion that he was robbed. The tenants themselves stealthily removed from the fields by night a portion of the crops, so that when they came to be reaped and divided, they were not what they ought to be. He denounced the dishonesty of the people. 'They are all alike,' he said, 'robbers, thieves, and liars.' Then his good sense came to his rescue, and he inquired more.

He found the following facts. Within the two years the Government assessments on the land had increased, the local price of all necessaries of life had risen. The little industries by which the people had made money when there was no field-work had died. In fact, the people were hard up. They could not pay the same rent as formerly and live. There was no other land to be had. Therefore to keep themselves alive they cheated. He revised his rents, and the people were honest as before. There are always two sides to every question.

But if the merchant is liable to see little of native life, and that the blackest side, the official is still worse off. He sees, it is true, much of native life, but that is all the evil side. He is concerned with crimes, with difficulties, with disputes of all kinds. Whenever he comes in contact with a native, it is because something has gone wrong. He judges by his experience. He knows nothing of the comparative crime of European nations, especially when they were in the same stage of civilisation, because he has never seen it or realised it. He sees little crime among the English in India, who are all of the middle class, and well-to-do, and that is his standard. But the Burman, he says, is very criminal. 'Why, half my day I am trying criminal cases.' That, taking into account the stage of civilisation and the condition of the country, the Burman is extraordinarily law-abiding, he does not even guess. Yet there is no doubt about the fact to every one who cares to study figures.

The parties in the law courts make false complaints and false defences, the witnesses lie, revenue defaulters run away, clerks, suddenly thrown into hopeless debt to help a relative, embezzle,—here is our everyday work, and what we see. Such events make their mark on us. The men who never come into courts, those who speak the truth, who pay their debts, and are honest, have no occasion for us. If a Burman seeks us, it is to ask a favour, perhaps an unfair one. Those who want no favours do not come. The real life of the country passes us by. We are not concerned with it, nor it with us. Although we affect it profoundly, it is indirectly, and not directly. Therefore we forget it. Is it not most natural that men should judge by the exceptions they see and not the rule they do not see? For their exceptions are our rule.

The mass of mankind is honest and truthful. Nay, all mankind are so when they can. No normal man, East or West, cheats or lies because it gives him pleasure, because he has a bent to it. If he does so, it is because he must, because he has a choice between two evils, and he takes the less. He lies, as the leaf insect lies by imitating a leaf, to save his life; as the wren when he dissimulates his nest to save his family; as the wild creatures imitate shadow and lights and inaminate things to get a meal. Do not you think they would rather not have to stoop to this if they could get on openly?

All savages are honest, absolutely honest, because they are free, because they are strong, because they

have little desire for money. And as these qualities of strength and freedom and indifference to wealth obtain, so is honesty and truth. The strong man takes what he can get because he is strong, the weak man lies because he is weak, and if he did not, the strong would destroy him from the face of the earth. It is his sole protection.

If a man lies to you, it is often because you have forced him to. If, for instance, you fine your servant out of his meagre pay for every glass he breaks, he will never tell you when he breaks them, and when they are missing, he will lie. But if you understand that breakages must occur sometimes, he will tell you honestly of what has happened, and if he is really to blame, he will generally offer to replace if he can what you have lost by his fault. In fact, truth and honesty are not absolute qualities. They are relations between man and man, between nation and nation. Where these relations are good and natural, there is truth between them. If one lies to the other, it is because there is something wrong, and the fault is generally on both sides. If the weak lie, it is for the strong to see if he has not by misuse of power forced him to it. And be sure such lies are not debited in the eternal reckoning to one side only.

As to the truth and honesty of the Burman, I would say this. He is like all people of his stage of civilisation and of his position, frequently inaccurate, or seems to us to be so. We ask him a question and he gives an answer. We find out afterwards that the answer is

wrong. But this is due generally to two causes which have nothing to do with truthfulness. Very often we ask him a question which he is quite unable to answer at all. We ask a carpenter, who rarely leaves the village, what game there is in the neighbourhood; we ask a teacher about crops; we ask a cultivator about fisheries. He answers because he sees we expect an answer, and probably because it would be discourteous to say 'I don't know.' If you ask, he must answer to the best of his ability. The answer is a guess. If we understood the facts, we should know it was a guess. We take it as a statement of knowledge. Even of facts within his knowledge he will be inaccurate. So are most people, unless they are trained observers. Any man is inaccurate just in proportion to his ability to observe and to remember correctly. In a peasant this is often small.

Again, in dealing between government officials and the people, there is, of course, sometimes a want of truth. There is evasion or deceit.

This is due mainly to two causes; because you, being the strong and the punisher, he, the defenceless, has but his dissimulation to save him. But in cases where this does not apply, there is another reason.

You are a foreigner. Now no people can or will have the standards to outsiders that they have to their own.

Every man has many standards. He has one for his family, one for his friends, one for his own class, one for his own nation, and a last for all outsiders.

No man considers a foreigner entitled to the same openness and truth from him as his own people. The Burmese say we have quite a different standard towards them than we have to ourselves. Naturally. Is not then the converse natural also? A friend may ask a question and deserve a reply. A foreigner has no such right. If he will ask, then he must be put off. As the old nursery proverb says, 'Ask no questions, and you will be told no lies.' Now it is our business to be always asking questions, sometimes very embarrassing ones, and we insist on answers. Thus we reap many lies.

The relation between two peoples, especially a strong and a weak, is never very high. The only way to estimate a people truly is to know how they treat each other, and how they estimate each other. Does each Burman consider all other Burmans liars? Does he refuse to trust them?

The astonishing thing is how greatly they trust each other. Amongst themselves, in all their dealings, their standard is very high. They will trade together for years and have no bonds and no agreements. They will lend money on a word. They will rely that when a man has promised he will perform. They will, for instance, take back goods that are found to have some unknown flaw. *Caveat emptor* is an English proverb. It obtains in our law courts because they are English, but not in native usage. If the Burman trader now notes it, he has learnt it from his English *confrères* A seller guaranteed his goods. This is the custom

always in the East. We are proud of our integrity. But a Burman would always rather trust another Burman than a European. He considers his own standard higher. The whole volume of petty trade and credit in the country is done by word alone. It is the Indian money-lender who introduced written documents.

I should say, from what I have seen, that between Burman and Burman the standard of honesty and truth is very high. And between European and Burman it is very much what the European chooses to make it.

Fate, for her reasons, has called us to the East. She has made our empire here. Our lot and that of these Eastern peoples is bound together for who can say how long. We are companions on the road of life. If we squabble as we go, then will the road be rough and long, and when we part, it will be as enemies.

But if we can be friends, then will the miles go pleasantly and fast. And when, in the end, Fate shall sever us, we shall go our ways with mutual regret, with mutual respect, with warm memories of the past.

And there is nothing that can more conduce to this, than that we should believe in each other's honesty and truth. Nothing can do more harm and raise more bitterness than the wild and whirling accusations that are made. Men are very much what they are made. They act up not to their own ideals, but to that conception their neighbours form of them. Tell a boy you know he is honest, and he will be honest. Tell

him you believe him to be a thief, and he often will be so to you. Why not? And the Burmese are our children, in our school.

The truth is there. Burman to Burman is as truthful as we are to each other. Why should not they be so to us? They would like to have it so, and I think they would answer that it lay very much in our own hands. Trust is the reward of trust, and of that only.

CHAPTER XXII

BUDDHISM

In the Burma of the Burmese there was nothing so prominent as their religion. In those days it dominated all things. What was the first thing you saw as you approached a village? It was the spires of the pagodas and monasteries rising amid the trees. From their height, their beauty, their situation on all the highest elevations, on all the bluffs beside the river, they dominated the view. They were the highest, the greatest, the most frequent expression of humanity. It seemed as if all the people's lives lay under their shadow and influence.

And in reality it was so. Buddhism had come into the life of these people as religion has rarely come into the life of any other people. From the cradle to the grave it held them, not in bonds of discipline but of influence. It penetrated their lives with its subtle currents, leading them whither it would—softening, sweetening, weakening. It might have been some strange lotus-eating song sung beneath the palms and flowers. 'Life is not good. Death is the best of all. Learn to forget. Put aside life and struggle and

weariness, that you may come at length to the haven where there is always peace.'

Its teachers reigned alone. There were none others there—no strange religions, no eager science, bringing discords to their ears, doubt into their hearts. There was no noise and bustle of the world to drown the long, low song. There was no fight, no race and struggle to distract men. Ambition had no goal, and fear no abyss. There was no triumph of the proud, nor cry of those who fall beneath their chariot wheels.

In all Burma the monks held highest rank. There were no hereditary nobles, no wealthy class to patronise them, to use them, to assist them. There were no poor to gather round them, and give them temporal power and responsibilities. They lived alone, on charity, without rank, without wealth, without power—the most powerful, the highest in rank of all men in all Burma. They educated the youth accepting them into religion; they spoke as superiors to kings and governors. Aided by the seclusion of the country, by the bounty of the soil, by the disposition of the people, they denied nature. They taught, that life was never good but always evil, that money was harmful, that the cardinal virtues were compassion, gentleness, charity. And the people believed.

Into this country has come the British Government with sword and rifle, preaching another faith, not newer but older, the oldest in the world.

For before all prophets and all teachers there lived on earth the God Necessity. Before all evangels, older

than all faiths, older than mankind, older than life, co-equal with the world, was his gospel of efficiency. He lives still and his gospel endures. The world is to the man who can best use it. She is not a dull world but a beautiful one, she is not to be despised but to be striven for, she is not a sad world but a happy one. But her beauty, her wealth, her happiness are for those only who know how best to use them. She is not for the weak, the foolish, the idle, the dealers in ideals, the dreamers of dreams. Especially she is not for those who deny her. She never yields her pleasures, her glories, her perfect beauty to those who scorn her. Like a fair woman, she is to the man who woos, who fights, who will if need be carry off and defend by force. Life is to the strong, the brave, the doers.

> None but the brave, none but the brave,
> None but the brave deserve the fair.

The world is not a hospital but a battle-field, no garden of the lotus-eaters, but of very stern realities. Necessity is the maker of men. That is the lesson the world has to teach. It is the first of all lessons, and the truest. It is the most beautiful. It is the gospel of progress, of knowledge, of happiness. And it is taught not by book and sermon, but by spear and sword, by suffering and misery, by starvation and death; not by sorrow imagined in the future, but very imminent to-day.

This truth, that the world is to those who can best appreciate her and use her, the Burmese had

forgotten. In their great valley between the mountain-ranges and the sea, secure from all invaders, with a kindly earth yielding food in ample quantities, it had fallen into the second place. The manly nature had sunk into disrepute, rusted by disuse, unsharpened by the clash with the weapons of others. Religion, which is true only when second to the truths of life, was exalted into the first place. The greater truth may be when rightly understood, the more false its falsehood when it is misplaced. And in Burma Buddhism had risen to that place.

A very beautiful religion, full of great thoughts, full of peace and beauty, it was born to be the helpmeet to the stronger knowledge. It is the softener of life, the sweetener. It gives solace to the fallen, to the weak, a safe asylum for the broken in life. It guards the bays where the storm-driven souls put in to refit. It is the gospel of the sick, the wounded, the dying.

But it is not the leader and the guide of men. Its teachings in themselves, as those of other faiths, tend to discontent with the world as it is, to dreams and fancies, to seclusion and idleness, to cowardice and untruth, to neglect of all the world gives. Neither are women the safest leaders, nor their ideals the gospel of mankind. But in Burma both these things had happened.

I do not see wherein the Burmese, in so far as they are Buddhists, have matter for complaint that we have conquered them. They had made their leading tenet that war was wrong. They believed or tried to

believe that the world is very unhappy. They said there was nothing in it worth having. All was illusion and despair, and release was the best for all. If then we have conquered them, what harm have we done? We have taken from them what they declared they despised. We have relieved them of the functions of government, and government, they said, was one of the great evils. We are developing the wealth of their country for both ourselves and them, but they say that wealth is evil. We interfere not at all with their faith. They may under our care cultivate it to its uttermost.

Will they? What is the future of their religion here in Burma? What has happened since we came thundering in with the strong wine of our new gospel. What are the tendencies in future? Will it die?

I do not think so.

Why should it die? It is not untrue. It is as true as any faith can be—truer to them than any other. It is certainly more akin to them than any other faith. It is a very beautiful faith. No greater disaster could be imagined to them than that they should forget it or disown it, that they should become without religion or adopt an alien one. This one has in many ways grown into their hearts, it should never be removed. But it should take its place below the greater truths. If it is to live, it must adapt itself and incorporate itself into the national needs. It must put a national truth above a scripture reading. It must remember there are higher truths than religion. It must do as ours

does. When the missionaries from Europe tell the Burmese Buddhists that our success is due to our faith, the Burmese Buddhist laughs. He reads the Sermon on the Mount and reflects. He turns upon the missionary and says, 'Your faith denounces war, but you attack and subject us ; your faith denounces riches, but you pursue them all day long ; your faith preaches humility, but there are none so proud as you. You succeed because you do *not* believe, not because you do.' Yet the missionary is not entirely wrong.

Consider an army. Its duty is to kill, to maim, to wound, to destroy by sword and fire. It is the assertion of strength. Its mission is to destroy the weak and effete, the useless and the cowards. Its watchward is death. Yet if the army is to be efficient it must be followed by its hospitals, its surgeons, its nurses. And their watchword is life. Their duty is to cure, to tend, to help, to comfort. They are the antithesis of the fighting strength. After the army has done its work, they are to revive and strengthen. And though army destroy army, no army strikes at the hospitals even of its enemies. Yet is the hospital part of the army a very necessary part too. Though army and hospital flaunt banners that are blazoned with two opposing words, they act not in opposition but in concert. Each is imperfect without the other. It is not untrue to say an army kills and destroys best because it has the best hospitals. Yet the army is less dependent on the hospital than the hospital on the army. The surgeons and nurses exist for the fighting

man, and not the fighting man for the surgeons. There would be no greater absurdity than to abolish your army and keep only your hospitals.

So have we made it in our national life. In Europe there is a belief that is akin in its moral teachings to Buddhism. It is as true to the Far West as Buddhism to the Far East. Its teachers and preachers tell us that it is the One the Only Truth. But the nations never entirely believe this. The first and greatest truth is to make the best use of this beautiful world God has given us. The greatest sin is to be useless, to cumber the ground. It is our duty to sweep away the cowardly, the inefficient, the weak, who misuse it, and put in their place the strong and useful. But we are not to make the world a hell. Religion is to be with the hospitals in the rear, to temper and mitigate and restrain the soldiers, to help and console, to pick up the wounded and those who have fallen by the way. And the churches in Europe accept and know that this is so. It is because we know the relative position of truths that we succeed. Therefore the missionary is right, though not perhaps in the way he means. What the Burman wants is not Christianity or any other faith. He already has too much faith. He has been nursed and cosseted and preached at too much. He must get up and fight. He must not shrink at the blows of the world and seek seclusion from it, but go out and affront it. He must throw off his swaddling bands of faith and find the natural fighter underneath. He must learn to be savage if

necessary, to destroy, to hurt and push aside without scruple. He must learn to be a man.

But he must never forget his faith altogether. No greater calamity could come to him. He would be as an army without restraint, a mere savage crowd. He would be an army without hospitals, fighting every day, with the sick and wounded clogging its fighting ranks, men dying in terror and agony, terrifying the fighting men. Let him never forget his faith.

That is what all friends would wish for the Burmese people and the Buddhist faith, that they should recognise the higher truth, that the Church should learn to come into the national life. Is there any sign of this happening?

At the time of the annexation of Upper Burma it was believed by Christian missionaries that the end of Buddhism was near. Mandalay, the stronghold of Buddhism, had fallen and there were many signs, they said, that Buddhism was tottering to its fall. The Burmans would soon be all Christianised.

They were but vain imaginings. There has been no falling off from Buddhism since then. There have been no conversions. Christianity finds a place for itself among the Karens and other wild tribes of the frontier. It brings to them a civilisation and help out of their barbarism, and they accept Christianity with the other blessings. To the Burman they have been always inferior and subject races, and it is natural to them to try by the assistance of the missionaries to maintain

their position and improve. They were never Buddhist, and had in fact no religion.

Amongst the Burmese Christianity makes no headway at all. It has, in fact, in many places actually declined. And though the total Christian population of Burma has increased, that is by the immigration of native Christians (servants and others) from India and, as above explained, by the adherence of wild tribes. To the Burman the Christian theory and the Christian priest has no attraction.

His distaste is deep-seated ; there seems no reason to expect any change.

Of other faiths, Mohammedanism makes no converts, and Hinduism is a non-proselytising faith. Burman and Buddhist are convertible terms, and will remain so as far as any one can see.

From creeds Buddhism has nothing to fear.

But in its battle for supremacy with the new thoughts and ideas that have followed the conquest it is different. With our rule came roads, security, trade. With trade has come an awakening, desire for wealth and what wealth can give. The keen fresh wind of winter has blown into the lotus garden, bringing with it movement and unrest. Yet Buddhism is in its way unshaken. It is the one and only religion that appeals to the people. There is even a revival of Buddhism, an increase in sacred thought and energy. There has been of late years extensive reformation in many monasteries that have grown slack, and a keener supervision. Learning has become more common, and

the standard of religious duty is higher. There are societies for the propagation of the faith, and there is far and near a keener appreciation and knowledge of the doctrine and belief.

Yet it is true in a way that Buddhism has declined. It is no longer supreme. It is no longer supposed that its teachings contain all truth. With the awakening has come a keener desire for life, and all that life can give. The horizons have broadened, and the Burman thinks that what he sees beyond is good. He, even less than other men, never really believed in his heart that life was evil. But he was always told so, and no doubt it was often rather slow. There was no use for money, and therefore nothing to be gained by being rich. But now he sees that money can buy many things, and he likes his purchases. When the monk said to him in the old days 'My son, wealth is a snare, use yours in charity,' he thought 'Well, why not? There is nothing I can buy with it of any use. And I can always get as much more as I want.' But now he says, 'I am sorry. If I spend all my money, what am I to do? My neighbour has built a big house with a verandah. My rival has imported a dog-cart and pony. Am I to be inferior to them? My wife likes European velvet; my son wants to go to the English school. All these are expensive. Yes, I know charity is good, and I will give freely of what I can afford. But I must think of myself first. Charity begins at home. It shall not end there, but it must begin there.'

In a hundred ways the new spirit begins to show.

It was immoral to take life, wicked to eat meat and connive at butchery. Beef was unknown in the old days, or got by stealth.

But nowadays, with the increasing work and hurry of life, the necessity of animal food is being keenly felt. To work harder and quicker you must have more than rice and vegetables. Meat must be had. Therefore the sale of beef is becoming common. Village after village in the districts is asking to have slaughter-houses built. There are few places now where you cannot buy beef or pork once a week at least. Yes, it is irreligious. But what can one do? Usually the difficulty is got over by hiring a Mohammedan to be butcher. No Burman will be a professional butcher even yet.

But every one eats meat, even the monks. It is a step in the right direction. Religion was made for man, not man for religion.

The higher education is also passing out of the hands of the monks. But this may possibly be only temporary. Even so the higher education now is artificial. A real education is an incorporation into the life of the nation, and that is not yet even in sight. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that a demand has arisen for a new and special education for government officials and clerks which is not supplied by the monks. This is not really a matter of much importance, for those educated in our schools are not the leaders of the people. They become in a way denationalised, which the people never do.

Other ways in which the monks have lost influence

is this. They no longer act ever as intermediaries between the people and the government, or between the criminal and justice. In the old days they had a right of asylum occasionally exercised, and they would frequently head a deputation for mercy to some rebel, or for pity in reduction of taxes. All this has now disappeared. A monk has become more strictly a monk, and meddles less with the world than ever. He never did so to any great extent. And therefore while Buddhism seems to me more strongly and securely established than ever, it has lost much of its former position. It is becoming to the Burmans what Christianity is to Europe, the second truth of life. With its feminine ideals and its cult of peace and beauty, it was never fitted to be leader of a race. The process must yet go much farther. There are too many monks, they must be reduced; there are too many monasteries, they should be grouped into larger units. Nearly all the best sites are occupied by pagodas, old and fallen into decay. The builders are dead very long ago and their names forgotten. No one repairs the pagodas built by another; each builds his own. The land is cumbered with old piles of brick. All the best sites are taken, and are lost to all use. Yet it is profanation to touch one of them. The living are cramped because of the forgotten dead. Animals must be killed for food, in defence, for sport. It is not the truest humanity to let a maimed bullock live, to allow thousands of dogs to be born into misery, to let a cobra go away unharmed that may to-morrow bring

mourning to a household. And it must be remembered that money is a good thing; if rightly used, it is one of the best of things.

For Buddhist and Christian ideals are to the stronger virtues what a wife is to a man. They are the complement, the half-truth, and with the others make up the whole truth. They are the refuge in distress, the help in difficulty, the consolation in despair. And in recognising her proper position, Buddhism will not fall but rise. She will but abdicate usurped and unnatural power to take one that is secure and permanent. She will cease to be a hindrance and become a helpmeet. She will become a national faith where now she is opposed to light and progress. She must enter into the national life and become one with it.

CHAPTER XXIII

WOMEN

VERY closely connected with religion is the position of women. Here in Buddhism, as in Europe with Christianity, women are its chief supporters. For its tenets and beliefs are women's tenets; they come easily to women's hearts, who believe by nature in the milder virtues; religion such as Buddhism is to them an evident truth. In Burma here, living their sheltered lives, never forced back by the rude blasts of an invading world, women gained a great ascendency. They assumed a freedom unknown elsewhere. They knew no limits but their own disinclination, and their weaknesses were little handicap to them. They came and went as freely as the men did, seeking for escort only where there were dangers to be feared, wild beasts or floods; of men they had little fear. The dangers that await women elsewhere when alone in fields or forests were small in Burma. The men respected the women, and the latter could defend themselves. And in addition, the administration of the law in these matters was very strict and very feminine. A man who even touched the hand of an unwilling girl suffered severely for it. That she tempted him was

nothing. A girl might tell her lover to meet her in the forest, and if he but kissed her, and she unwilling, he could be severely punished. Men learned sometimes to fear woman as one fears a nettle that has a deadly sting. Such a freedom may sound ideal. It was not then. It is not so now, for all is not yet changed. A Burman magistrate will still inflict unheard-of penalties for slight offences. He will believe all that women tell him. He will condemn at their word. And, alas! their word is often false. More than half the complaints that are made are openly palpably false, and of the rest more than half the story is so. For women are very tenacious of reputation, and they will give away a lover quickly to retain it. Feminine influence and feminine ideas pervaded all things. I have already written of the civil law of marriage and inheritance. It is a woman's law. Such customs of division could only exist where man was less necessary and woman more important. It is pleasant for a girl to be the equal heiress of her brother. But it is not the way to make the best either of law or money. Nor does it make the best men or women. It is not good for a man to be feminised. It is not good for him to feel that as he has no greater right than a woman, for he immediately and rightly infers that he has no greater responsibilities. It is not good for him to have woman's ideals. A woman may say 'I am afraid.' It is her right. Courage is not a virtue that the world wants from woman. But for a man to be a coward and to confess openly and without shame that he is so is a

sad thing. The Burmese generally are not cowards. They are naturally courageous, active, and daring. But to declare, as Buddhism does, that bravery is of no account; to say to them, as the women did, you are no better and no more than we are, and should have the same code of life,—could anything be worse? No doubt it is the result of circumstances, of environment. Women elsewhere do not love cowardice. In themselves they condone it as a weakness they cannot help, as a charm that gives them the protection of man. But in man they despise it. Yet the Burmese women did not do so. If a man said 'I was afraid and ran away,' they only thought, 'quite natural, so should I.' Men and women are not sufficiently differentiated yet in Burma. It is the mark of a young race. Ethnologists tell us that. In the earliest people the difference was very slight. As a race grows older the difference increases. I have spoken of the Burmese as children in a nursery. For in the nursery boys and girls have not yet learned to differ, not yet learned each their own strength and weakness. They look alike. Their dress is not so different. Their codes are still much the same. So with the Burmese up to twenty, the boys and girls are wonderfully alike.

The boys have long hair, small smooth faces, soft voices. The sex of the girls is not accentuated in older nations. Their jackets are almost the same as men's jackets, hang just as straight. Their waists are broad, their hips no broader. A boy of twenty can dress as a girl, a girl can dress as a boy and no one

can guess. The differentiation of life only comes in where necessity has made it. Women cannot plough, nor fell forests, nor cut firewood; men do not spin or plant rice. But the differentiation has not gone so far as in other nations.

Yet success comes from difference. What man can do best it is best he should do. If it brings him great power, greater authority, it also gives him greater responsibility. Such is best for both. Men and women are not rivals but partners, and it is best that each partner should do what he can do best. So far since the annexation I have not seen much change. The women go about as freely as ever, the law remains unchanged; it is still assumed that much the same code should govern both sexes. The cult of courage has not progressed. It has perhaps even decreased. The Burmese armies may have been without discipline, yet they could at times fight bravely. They notably did so in 1852. And an army keeps alive the cult of bravery and discipline, of self-denial, of cohesion. Now there is no army at all. In the old days a soldier was to some extent ashamed to show cowardice. He would and did die for his king. It may be some explanation of the utter failure of 1885 that in fact it was a woman who issued orders. Soldiers do not like to be commanded by a woman. And thus in this direction the annexation has tended to make bad worse, by abolishing the army and any cult of courage at all. Even if a man be brave now and energetic, he has no scope for showing his qualities. To see a brave soldier

rise to honour, to hear and see brave deeds done by one's own people is more ennobling to a nation than any wealth or any learning. The Burmese in their sheltered valleys learnt this virtue very little ; they have now none of it. It is a loss. I do not see how a people worth anything can be made without it. Yet the regiments we have tried to raise have not succeeded. Perhaps because our gift of leading ends with the Bay. The natives east of it will not take our leading. It is a pity. They may, however, succeed later. I can imagine nothing that could do the Burmese so much good as to have a regiment of their men distinguish itself in our wars. It would open their eyes to new views of life. But their faith stands in their way, and their women.

In other ways, however, the new conditions of life are threatening the position of the women in many ways. Their means of earning a livelihood is being taken from them. The women were independent and powerful because they could live by their own efforts. They inherited property equally, they could equally with man earn a living. They wove cotton and silks, and they held nearly all the petty trade of the country in their hands. A woman could always earn enough to live on. There were looms beneath every house in every village. Nearly all the wear of the people was locally woven. But Manchester and Germany and Japan have altered all that. The bazaars are full now of imported goods. The old cottons were thick and warm and clumsy, the new are thin and fine and well

finished. They are also cheaper. No one now will buy a local cloth if he can get an imported one. The home-weaving industry is dead. No one could make enough to live on by it. You hardly ever see a loom now or hear the 'click, click' that used to be so common. The bazaar-selling still survives, but it is threatened. As in every country the tendency is for the greater traders to squeeze out the smaller, the larger shops to overshadow the small ones. In Rangoon the large English shops where everything is sold are undermining the bazaar stalls. They are full of Burmese purchasers, who in the old days would go to the bazaar. And although up-country the signs are fewer, still they are perceptible. Businesses tend to become larger. Now, large businesses cannot be managed by women. They have not the wide outlook, the greater knowledge on which large businesses are built. They must very slowly but very certainly lose that grip upon the local trade that they have now. It is falling into stronger hands, as elsewhere in the world.

There is no doubt, as I have said, that the laws of marriage and inheritance must be modified. And all the changes are to the detriment of the position of the woman as it now stands.

With her power of independence will disappear her free-will and her influence. When she is dependent on her husband she can no longer dictate to him. When he feeds her, she is no longer able to make her voice as loud as his is. It is inevitable that she should retire. At present to every one who comes to Burma

she seems the predominant partner. She attracts by her freedom, her industry, her independence. After India, she is a very notable appearance. So all men praise her. They take her for the strength of the nation. Yet she is perhaps a symptom and a cause of its weakness. The nations who succeed are not the feminine nations, but the masculine. Woman's influence is good provided it does not go too far. Yet it has done so here. It has been bad for the man, bad too for the woman. It has never been good for women to be too independent, it has robbed them of many of their virtues. It has never been good for men to feel that their women-folk were independent of their help. It improves a man to have to work for his wife and family, it makes a man of him. It is demoralising for both if the woman can keep herself and if necessary her husband too. Therefore the peculiar charm that all travellers see in the women of Burma is bound to fade. They have their day. They have contributed to make the nation what it is, gay, insouciant, feminine. They have brought religion to the pitch it reached. But the world is a man's world, and now that Burma has come out of the nursery it must learn to be a man.

That the Burmese woman should understand the new conditions arising to her is necessary for the future of the people. I think she will. It will depend on the man as well whether she does so. For like all women she does not care for work. She does not work for work's sake. She works because she must. If she has held closely to her inheritance, to her work,

it was perhaps because therein lay her only safety. Marriage was easily broken, a loose tie too soon unloosed. Unless she had her own property, her own means of earning a living, she had no certainty. That most divorces were at the petition of women made no difference. In such a matter she should be protected against herself. But if women are to surrender power, they must receive safety. They must be able to rely upon their fathers, their husbands, their sons, more than they do now. If the men are to have more power, they must be ready to accept more responsibility. Burma has been the converse of India in this matter. In India all women except the very poorest are idle, dependent, secluded. In Burma all are active, independent, open. They are the two extremes, and both are bad. In neither case has either sex learned its strength, its weakness, its responsibilities. What they all want is common-sense. Not a new sense but the *communis sensus* of the Romans. There are many senses—hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling, and each by itself is liable to err. Common-sense is that which contains them all, which makes each the help-meet of the other, which checks all instincts by the counsel of the senses. It is the knowledge of proportion. So it is in national life. There are many instincts—for money, for power, for glory, for freedom, for happiness. They are all good in measure. They can be reached in their fulness only by the combination of all power to these ends. All kinds of men—soldiers, sailors, peasants, merchants, workmen, men of action

and men of thought, women and priests, all go to a nation, and the most successful is that where each has its own place, his own influence.

In the life of a people as in the life of a man there are two periods when women's power is greatest—at the dawn of life, and at its close. Women rule us in our youth, and in our age. But in the prime of life it is the men who lead. It is the mark of rising nations that men control and women are not seen. They have their influence, no doubt, but it is hidden.

When nations fail, the women's influence again appears. She leads, she drives, and the men follow. It is the men then who are hidden, and their influence is gone.

But the Burmese are not grown old. They are in the first stages of a people. They are very young. Their world is still a nursery, where the woman and the priest are strong.

When they grow older, they must change. But the change must needs be slow. What is twenty years in a people's life? What is a hundred?

But still the change is coming. As the people grow, so will they alter.

CHAPTER XXIV

BURMESE AND IMMIGRANTS

CANON BARDSLEY, speaking of the first few centuries after the Norman conquest of England, points out that the conquest was not limited to William and his armies. It was not only rulers who came, nobles, court officers, and soldiers, it was all sorts of people. England was hailed as a land of promise and of wealth awaiting the explorer. England, which had been severed for 700 years, was overrun from all parts of the Continent.

The Lombard merchant came and traded in money ; the Jew came with him. Flemish cloth merchants travelled all over buying wool and selling cloth. Ironsmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewellers, embroiderers, tailors, tanners, traders, and artisans of all kinds came and established themselves. For England was till then a purely agricultural country, and its people were only cultivators. What little handicrafts they had were local and poor, and disappeared before the wider, stronger art of the Continent. The Anglo-Saxon sank under a wave of which the crest was Norman, but the bulk was of all sorts of

people. He lost his government, his trade, such as it was; he was shouldered and hustled on all sides. Yet he retained the land, and because of that he stayed, while the wave failed and died. England is Anglo-Saxon still, and the foreign element has been absorbed or disappeared.

Something like this invasion in a small way has occurred in Burma of to-day.

Lower Burma, when we annexed it in 1852, was a rich delta country, sparsely inhabited by a people who had few handicrafts of any sort, and who were in all matters of industry in a very elementary stage.

The Upper Burma we annexed in 1885 was little different. It had, it is true, more artisans than Lower Burma, and was in a somewhat more advanced stage. But compared with either India in the West, or China in the East, it was still very young. It was almost purely agricultural, and it had no large traders, no bankers, no export merchants. Its people were all peasant cultivators, and of the larger ways of life it had no knowledge.

Thus in the development of the country since the conquest, the Burmese have been able to take only one part. This part is that of the agricultural peasant. The people from the over-populated arid central tracts of Upper Burma have poured into the delta, and have extended cultivation in the most wonderful way. The area under rice has increased by leaps and bounds, and Burma has risen rapidly to the head of the rice-

exporting countries. All this rice is grown by the Burmese.

But more goes to the making of a successful rice-trade than merely growing the grain. The cultivators must be financed. All over the world the extension of cultivation is dependent greatly on the facilities for obtaining money on loan. This want could be supplied to a small extent, and in small sums, by the Burmese themselves. They had no big capitalists, and no class with any knowledge or experience of large affairs. Thus Burma has been overrun by the Chetty banker class from Madras, who for a hundred years have been the money-dealers of Southern India. Their rates are high, and might even be called usurious, but that is simply because money is scarce. They are honest and capable, and there is no doubt that, in the absence of better facilities for banking, they filled a much-needed want. Nothing like the extension that has occurred could have taken place without their help.

Then rice before being exported must be milled. No Burman had the capital or knowledge to build mills, which are nearly all in the hands of European firms, and the mechanics and the large quantity of labour required there have been provided by trained men and imported coolies from Madras.

Then there are roads and railways to be built and worked, there are steamers to be run, there are innumerable trades upon which the rice business depends and which depend on it. And in all these the Burmese have little or no part. A civilisation has been suddenly

sprung upon them as it was upon the English in 1066, and in each case it has taken long to be learnt. The Burmese have remained purely cultivators, and have yet acquired but little of any of the imported trades and businesses, though they are fast learning some of them. They have confined themselves in the main to growing the immense crops of rice that, increasing year by year, have made the prosperity of the province. But the bulk of all the other trades is in foreign hands. There are hardly any Burmese merchants as yet. And as the top rungs are occupied by foreigners, so are the lowest. As the bankers, merchants, contractors, millers, exporters, and so on are all European, Indian, or Chinese, so the labourer class are imported coolies from Madras. The Burmese are too busy cultivating the fields, they do so well at it, and the demand for new peasants to till the newly-opened areas is so great that the Burmese rarely are reduced to labourers' work, except, perhaps, for a few months, when there is no field-labour. Therefore all the gangs of coolies on the railways or roads, all the mill coolies, all the durwans and other menials in Rangoon and other large delta towns are Indians. All the hackney carriage drivers are Indians, all the railway porters, all the steamer crews, all the village sweepers even are Indian. They are imported in tens of thousands from Madras every November, and nearly all return again in May and June. They are of great value to the province, for without them progress would have been slow. Without this cheap labour from India, it would have

been necessary to employ Burmese labour, and this would have been unfortunate in two ways. It would have withdrawn the cultivator from the fields, where he is much better employed, and it would have been so expensive that only half the work could be done. Nothing has been more useful to the province in general, and to every Burmese cultivator in particular, as this ability of the capitalists to obtain cheap labour from India. Without the Indian labourer, the Burmese peasant cultivator could never have extended and flourished as he has.

I said a while ago that I was no believer in the Oriental mind. Nor am I. But sometimes when I hear some opinions expressed by the West upon the East, I feel inclined to belief in an Occidental mind; and a strange and weird mind it is at times. Here is an instance of it. Because the Burmese have preferred to remain peasant owners of their own land to being labourers, because they are able thereby to retain their family life, to maintain a higher standard of comfort, and to earn four or five times as much profit as a labourer can; because they are, in so doing, better, stronger, more useful men, they have been lectured and abused without end. Is a gang of Indian coolies seen working on a tramway, 'the Indian is ousting the Burman.' Is a globe-trotter's trunk carried from steamer to rail by an Indian porter, he writes to the paper that 'the Burman is disappearing.' Does a contractor find it impossible to hire labour locally amid the cultivation of rice-fields and have to import

it, he indignantly announces in his paper that 'the Burman must go.'

It has become a superstition among certain people that because he is the labourer, therefore the Indian is a better man than the Burman, and that the latter is giving way to him. Some announce that the Burman is disappearing and will soon be extinct. And this in a country where such foolish imaginings could easily be checked from official returns by any one who really wanted facts. I will suppose the reader such a person. Here are some of the figures from the census of 1901, compared with 1891.

In 1891 there were 4,042,000 Burmese Buddhists in Lower Burma; by 1901 they had increased to 4,597,000, an increase of 555,000,—not bad for a disappearing people.

In 1891 there were 142,000 Hindus (mostly imported coolies), and in 1901 there were 241,000. This is a good increase too; but it must be remembered that whereas the Burmese increase is a permanent settled population, the coolie increase is not so. They are nearly all males, they come but for a year or two; of the total 241,000 in Burma in February 1901, 150,000 had not been six months in the country. If the census were taken in June instead of February, the figures would be, Burmese, 9,184,121, and Hindus, 130,000 in the whole province.

These immigrants die in terribly large numbers, and they are mostly congregated in Rangoon and a few other places in coolie barracks. Having no wives,

they do not breed, and eventually they all return home when they have made what, in India, will seem to them a fortune.

The increase in the Indian immigrant coolie class is simply the result of the increase in the culture of paddy for export by the Burmese cultivators. It depends on that purely and simply, and when with the filling up of the Delta the amount available for export decreases, so must the import of coolies. In Upper Burma, where there are few mills, the number of Hindus is only 43,000 against 4,589,121 Burmese, and they do not increase.

If indeed the Indian coolie were a better cultivator than the Burmese peasant, then indeed there might be danger to the latter. But that is not so. The Indian cultivator cannot live side by side by the Burman. He has neither the energy, the knowledge, nor the physique. He cannot work the hours, he cannot stand the climate, he has not the versatile intelligence. The fact has often been proved. When Upper Burma was first taken, it was the government policy to encourage settlements of Indians, large grants and great concessions, in revenue and other ways, were made to assist such colonies. Where are they now? Not one survives. The Indians have drifted away to work as coolies on the roads, and the Burman tills his fields. Whether in Upper or Lower Burma the story is the same. Where the Burmese peasant and the Indian peasant meets, the latter fails. Nowhere is there any sign on the other side. In Tenasserim an Indian

colony was founded some sixty years ago in the waste lands. There was no competition from the Burmese, who have even now only just begun to spread there in their migration from the Upper Province. It has done fairly well. But its increase is decreasing, and the Burmese are pouring into the division. The Indians may perhaps hold what they have got, but they will not spread.

In some of the new delta districts a few Indian coolies, having saved money, have settled on the land. Amid the vast extension of cultivation in these rich swamps it would be very strange if some Indians did not do so. But they are like black spots on a yellow wall, noticeable because they are but spots. In one of these new areas a recent report showed that in eleven years the Burmese, all cultivators, had increased from 50,000 to 98,000, while the Indians, mostly coolies, imported to work in mills and field-labourers, had increased from 1000 to 4000 only. Yet the report said the remarkable thing was the increase of the Indians. And this reminds me of a conversation in a train.

He was an Englishman, a contractor on the railway, and he told me he had contracted for railways in many lands. He knew, he said, everything that could be known about labour in India, Burma, and the Straits; and the Burman, he said, was no use. 'He is incorrigibly lazy,' said my companion. 'He does not know how to work. He is a loafer.'

'He raises a good deal of rice,' I suggested.

'Does he?' said my companion indignantly. 'Well, I will tell you about that. He raises rice because he can't help it, and he never works himself if he can help it. Suppose he only owns a quarter of an acre of land, he won't trouble to even plough it. He drives his cattle round it. Then his wife sows it by putting rice on her feet and treading it in, and when the rice is ripe, he hires an Indian coolie to reap it. What do you think of people like that? They must "go."'

'Tell me,' I said, 'a little more. He is well fed?'

'Fat,' was the reply.

'He dresses well?'

'Silks mostly.'

'He can always read and write?'

'May be. Can't say.'

'He supports his monasteries well?'

'Yes, the lazy devils.'

'And I can add that while the land is no richer than, say Bengal, he pays in revenue twice or thrice as much as a Bengalee does?'

'Can't say.'

'Well, the blue books will tell you. Now I will tell you what I think. If indeed it be the fact as you say that he can afford, out of the crop of a quarter of an acre of land, to hire Indian labour to till it, can dress his wife and himself in silk, can be, for a peasant, well educated, can bring up a large family, can pay heavy taxes, can support his church, and remain free and independent and happy, he is a genius, nothing less than a genius, and instead of "going"

will soon inherit the earth, and we shall have to work for him.'

My companion said no more, but he was very angry, and a few days later he wrote to the local paper, and quoted all the authorities who knew least about Burma or the Burmese to prove that the Burmese must 'go.'

But, in fact, all the supposition that there is an antagonism between the Burmese and the Indian immigrants is wrong. There is no such antagonism. The Indians, whether traders or money-lenders, mechanic or coolie, are very valuable to Burma and the Burmese. They introduce new ideas, new handicrafts, new skill. For instance, they introduced the business of tinsmiths, and the Burmese have learnt it from them. They have brought in capital. They have rendered roads and railways possible. They have only competed with the Burmese where the latter were inferior, such as in carpentry, where the Chinese are so good. And the Burmese are learning from the Chinese, in this way, what they could never learn any other way.

Near the towns Chittagonians have started gardens, growing vegetables and fruit the Burmese never heard of. In a hundred ways the Indians and Chinese are doing for the Burmese what the French, Italians, and Flemings did for England. They are educating them in business. They are schoolmasters, teaching what our government cannot. But in cultivating the main crops the Burmese stands easily master. No immigrant can compete with him. When the push comes the Burmese remain, the

others go. And as time goes on and the Burmese learn, no doubt, it will be so in most other matters. The Burmese are very young, but they learn very quickly. They are very enduring, and they have unbounded courage and confidence in themselves. They are handicapped by their laws of inheritance, but not in other ways.

They are extremely prosperous now. There is less poverty, less sickness, less unhappiness than among any people I have seen East or West. If there ever was a people about whom pessimism sounded absurd, it is about the Burmese.

CHAPTER XXV

CONCLUSION

AND what, after all, is the conclusion? What is it that we are teaching in our Eastern school; what is it that our pupils learn; what will endure?

It has been said that if we left India to-morrow, in a year we should be forgotten. Nothing would remain to show that we had ever been there; nothing but the ruins, perhaps, of an abandoned fort, or the rusting steel of a silent railway. India would have returned to what it was, to its own life that we have never touched.

In a way this is of course quite true.

There is nothing in our rule that takes root, nothing that has gone into the heart of the East. It is a product of the West, its life comes from the little island in the North Sea. It is as the branch of a great tree whose trunk is six thousand miles away, whose sap has come to it from the north. Its leaves die and fall in the cemeteries of the East, but no roots come from the branch to enrich the earth. It is of the West, purely of the West. And when the trunk grows weak, then will the arms fail. If the English Government grow

old, then will the Indian Government die. It will disappear once and for ever, and hardly even its memory will remain. The East will forget, because she remembers only those things that touch her heart, that fire her imagination, and we have never done either. She endures us because she must. She will gladly forget us when she can. When she builds for herself anew, she will not take over one brick even of our institutions, she will not copy even one line of our façades. Her foundations will be set other than where we have set them, and as the foundations are laid so the buildings grow. We cannot teach her, and she will not learn. Neither now nor ever is it possible that India should take from us one single political thought, one institution, one law, one custom. As the Briton never copied nor adapted from the Romans, so neither will the East from us. We belong to other climates, other ages, other ways. The East is very young wine, and our forms are very old bottles.

What governments the East will have no one can prophesy, except that, if indigenous, they will not be like ours.

Have we then no effect? Do we do nothing? Are the people not changing? Will they then be the same in future as when we found them?

That is another matter.

A boy when he leaves school may forget his schoolmaster, may forget his Greek and Latin, may throw aside for ever all his books, might forget every lesson he has learnt, yet he would have changed. He has

grown up. He has abandoned childish things. He has come out of the nursery. He has seen how boys and men live. He has fallen, may be, from his mother's standards; he has grown stronger, coarser, harder, a brave man fitted to face the world. He has passed the stage that all boys and all nations must pass through before they are grown up.

Such is it with these people, the Burmese. We found a child shut in its valley between the mountains and the sea, unruly, vain, charming as a child is. And we have brought it into a larger world where other children live. We have put it into a class with others. We have tried to teach it somewhat of what we knew. We have lectured and we have taught, and they have not listened. We have said 'Follow our way'; but they have never followed. We have said 'Be even as we are,' and they have turned aside. They cannot learn, nor can we teach. We know not how to teach, nor what.

And in fact we are not here to teach, but only to rule. When we have brought our school together, that is enough. The boys teach each other. That is the only way that boys can learn; it is the only way that peoples learn. As they grow older, stronger, less strange, they learn from the others. They see what they do, and they learn. They alone know what knowledge suits them, what they can learn and what they cannot, what is good for them and necessary and what is harmful. There is an instinct guides boys and peoples for its own hidden ends.

The people are learning fast, they are growing fast.

What they will become no one can tell. In some ways it seems as if the change was not all good. Coming into the world has tarnished some of the charm that clung to them in their valley nursery. The boy has learnt to swear. His manners certainly have not improved. But he has grown. He has forgotten much. Sometimes it seems as if he had forgotten more than he had learnt. Well, I suppose that is always so. Before you can learn you must forget, before crops can be grown the forest must be cut. The forest is more pleasant, but the crop more useful, and to some people beauty will be always more desirable than mere utility. But in the world this is not so, or rather perhaps there are, as Solomon would have it, times and places for one and for the other. There is a time to play and a time to work, a time to laugh and a time to cry.

I think, perhaps, the Burmese would say that the latter time had come to them just now. For they are still shy and strange to the new world. They have not rearranged themselves. They have not learned to hope, nor what to hope for. The ideals that were theirs are now impossible, and they have not yet new ones. They have been scattered and have not yet again coalesced. They have been defeated, and they have not yet learnt that defeats are the gates to wisdom. They want a direction and a purpose. They grow fast, and they have growing pains, and think they are the pangs of an approaching dissolution.

Sometimes it makes one laugh.

'Our lands all over the provinces,' said one to me, 'used never to be mortgaged. Now hardly half the land is free from encumbrances. We are ruined, ruined, ruined! Save us ere too late.'

To which the answer is. 'In the old days there was no trade, no money. No one could borrow if he wanted. No one would have lent, even if he had the money, because he could get no return for his capital, and no security. Land had no value. In the great prosperity that has come to you, land has become very valuable. You make enormous profits with your agriculture. For your continual extensions you want money, and now you can get it from the Chetties, and your land is good security. What you want is more facilities for getting cheap money, not less. The indebtedness of a country is to a great extent a measure of its prosperity, not the reverse. The facts that the money-lenders are foreigners and that the interest they charge is high are drawbacks. But you can remedy that by learning to form banks yourselves. Cheer up!'

This is but an instance. There is nothing more noticeable among the better-class Burmese to-day than their pessimism. They have become depressed. They have little knowledge, and that little has disagreed with them. They have got no standards. They compare a Burmese peasant with an English merchant. They do not know that in England we have peasants too who are far poorer than any Burmese villagers. They have no idea of the poorer English,

French, or Germans. They are lost. They publish papers in the vernacular, which sometimes read like nursery lamentations over imaginary ills. They have lost confidence and pride and courage. And though they would be leaders of the people, they know not whither to lead them, and the people will not follow.

I do not know whether this class will ever be any use or not. They certainly never will unless they can get back their Burmanity, to coin a word. A Japanese can adopt European ideas and remain a Japanese. It seems that at present neither in India nor in Burma is this possible.

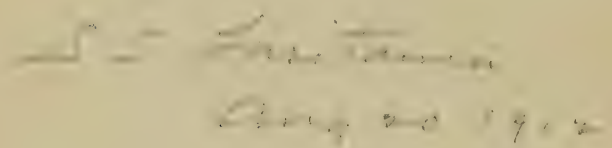
But this matters little in the end. For the Burmese people consists of the *people*, not the few advocates, officials, and others who have appeared at the surface under our rule. And the people are not as the more educated class. They have not lost courage, nor have they lost hope. They are proud still, and they are Burmese. And they are sure that the Burmese will some time prove that they too can grow into a manhood that the world will respect.

And if I were to offer them my advice, it would be something like this.

Try and understand things as they are. Try and accept the present and make the best of it. Fate, who brought you and us together, knows what she knows; she knows what she wants. If she has sent you to school, it is to some ends that are always good.

Then try to learn and to forget. But do not forget too much. Knowledge is good, intelligence is good,

education is good, money is very necessary. But above all these things are self-respect, are courage, are hope and cheerfulness. You used to be proud of being Burmese. Be so still. It is the foundation of all things. If you want your own respect, if you want our respect, if you want the world's respect, that is the very beginning. What you can adapt then, accept, but never copy for copy's sake. And be of good courage. There are few people in the world who have such a happy present, such a hopeful future as you have. If you only knew the miseries of so much of the rest of the world, your lot would seem to you a very fortunate one. Face always to Fortune with a laugh, for she is a woman and she likes smiles. You will never get anything out of her with a tear.



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